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IN SUSTAINING the President's veto of the Patman bill the Senate did not remove the bonus issue from politics either for this session or the next election. The nine votes needed to support the President's veto may not be so easy to muster against the Clark resolution, which gives the President three alternative ways of paying the outstanding certificates—with greenbacks, bonds, or cash from the work-relief appropriation. In reality the choice is between cash and bonds, and either method is repugnant to the President. But the measure would be free of the stigma of mandatory greenback "inflation," and might be accepted by some Senators who were frightened by the Patman bill. The forecast in Washington, however, is that the veto of any immediate payment of the bonus will be sustained in this session, which would throw the issue into the next campaign. This will not handicap the Democrats except in a few cases unless the veterans unite for their revenge and can find a strong organization through which to express themselves. A third party which could count on a substantial veteran vote would have chances, but payment of the bonus is at best a plank in a platform and not a platform. As it appears highly improbable that the third-party elements can unite by next year, the President's strategy in vetoing the Patman bill was successful but hardly remarkable for its boldness. He is entitled to credit for consistency and wisdom, but he does not deserve the wreaths for heroism which have been bestowed upon him.

THE VETO MESSAGE was the clearest exposition of the case against immediate payment of the bonus which has yet been made. The President read it to Congress not only to impress the legislators but to reach the national radio audience. The average veteran, and the average voter too, argues that if farmers are being paid for plowing under crops and killing pigs, the veteran who offered his life in the war also can be paid. They see no distinction between spending for recovery for the benefit of certain industries and occupations, and spending for the benefit of men who have an acknowledged claim on the Treasury. But the demand pressed by the veterans is not simply for payment, but for payment today of an obligation which does not fall due for ten years, as though the present value of money were the same as its future value. It is not the same, and the President explained this difference clearly and carefully. This simple financial truth will have dawned on many for the first time. We believe it would have been wiser had the President made the point clear earlier. It then would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the veterans to persist in saying that they were only asking for what they were entitled to. They would have had to admit they were making a fresh demand on the Treasury and to defend it against the charge of class legislation. We still believe it possible and desirable to settle this question once and for all by issuing bonds to the veterans, which they can discount at their present value or hold until 1945, at their own discretion. They should have their certificates in the form most useful to them. But they do not, and we believe they do not wish to, constitute a special group with an unlimited claim on the Treasury.

POSTMASTER GENERAL FARLEY'S report on ocean-mail contracts has gone unnoticed in the preoccupation of Washington with other affairs. But it deserves wide circulation and public comment, particularly at a time when Congress will be discussing a new method of subsidizing the merchant marine. The report goes into every existing contract, tells how it was made, how much it has cost, and discusses the advisability of cancelation. Mail contracts now cost the government $28,850,000 a year. Wages, maintenance, subsistence, and repair for the 282 American-flag vessels certified for operation upon ocean-mail routes amount to $28,460,000. In other words, the government is paying all the running expenses of our ocean-going merchant fleet. It also has provided the greater part of the capital with which the ships were bought or built. The companies' own share in the value of their fleet is $80,558,000, and their debt to the government is $112,514,000. Yet some companies have made handsome profits, and others have found ways of withdrawing their earnings without repaying their loan. Mr. Farley's industry in gathering the voluminous data is not without political motive, since it reflects on his predecessor, Mr. Brown. In the Hoover days a person of political importance could buy a shipping line, negotiate a

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mail contract in advance, dodge honest bidding, borrow the money for his fleet chiefly from the government, and obtain from the mail contracts enough revenue to pay running expenses. This procedure was excused as a contribution to national defense. But shipping shrewdness was not confined to the Republican era. Only the watchfulness of a few Congressmen has prevented the interests from slipping a bill designed for similar ends through the present Congress.

A NEW BRANCH of government, unintended by the makers of the Constitution or by Congress, is emerging in Washington. It is the office of Comptroller General J. R. McCarl. Its powers were carefully enough defined in the act which created it, and we will not say that he has exceeded them. But he has exercised them in a manner which has made him one of the great policy makers of the nation. Since it is his function to interpret the law as applying to public expenditures, he holds an effective veto over all projects and can delay anything which he does not wish to see expedited. The consequence is that government officials now send their plans to the Comptroller General before they proceed with them, and he is in a position to offer "constructive" advice. Mr. McCarl is an old-fashioned Republican, and he repeatedly frustrates the more modern Democratic Administration. His latest effort has been to discredit the TVA. Senator Norris lashed out at McCarl, who was once his secretary, for having the mentality of the power interests. The revolt against him has risen as his obstructionism has increased, but apparently there is no weapon at hand. The law gave him a throne and he proposes to occupy it.

THE PACIFIC MANEUVERS have emphasized the air arm rather than the navy, indicating a subtle but fundamental change in fighting methods. So long as power in the Pacific was measured in terms of navies, a deadlock existed between us and Japan, in that neither country could undertake to build up absolute supremacy. Not until the slow but substantial evolution of flying reached the point now attained, where air activities west of Hawaii are practical, was there any outlook for changing the power ratio to our advantage. The preparation for a commercial air route across the Pacific is not being lost on the Japanese. To this has been added the surprise of the recent maneuvers, and now they have the admission of General Kilbourne as to what is in the minds of our militarists. In the course of the same testimony before the House Committee on Military Affairs which drew the recent reprimand from the President, this officer, the assistant chief of staff, advocated a central air base in Alaska. If we had it, with a number of advanced service bases along the coast, and if we possessed the new type of bombing plane now being developed, the results according to the General would be advantageous. "The Japanese, as is well known," he said, "fear an attack of bombs. You can see that that would have quite an extensive effect on their diplomatic relations and their conversations." The jump from Alaska to Tokyo is 3,200 miles, and this distance remains too far for an immediate threat. But it is obvious that we are trying to impress the Japanese by distending our biceps, and the Pacific game is changed from one of maintaining a fleet which can be excused as purely defensive to one of expanding an air force which can only be regarded as offensive.

CAPTAIN ANTHONY EDEN'S victory over Mussolini at Geneva may not prevent a war in Abyssinia, but it illustrates the efficacy of the League machinery when statesmen really desire to use it. Throughout the week Mussolini had utilized every weapon at his command to prevent the Council from considering the Italian-Abyssinian dispute. As a last resort he had it in his power through the unanimous-consent clause to impose a veto on anything which the Council might decide. Yet the fact that the League existed and that there was a genuine determination on the part of a representative of a major power to safeguard its effectiveness meant that the concerted pressure of all countries could be directed upon Italy, forcing it to accept arbitration and possible mediation by outside powers. While the settlement is essentially a compromise, it offers at least a hope that hostilities can be averted. Having been assured that the powers would not interfere with war preparations or the dispatch of troops to Africa, Italy agreed to permit the League to mediate if the arbitrators have not reached a settlement by August 26. The Council may act a month earlier if the four arbitrators appointed by the disputants are unable to agree upon the selection of a fifth arbitrator. This gives the League from one to two months before the termination of the rainy season in Abyssinia in which to investigate the various phases of the dispute and to pass judgment. It may be that Mussolini has committed himself so far that he dare not turn back, but the prospect of a thorough airing of the issues before the bar of world opinion is bound to act as a curb on his imperialistic aspirations.

THE LATEST ATTACK upon the franc is not due so much to any immediate weakness in the French fiscal situation as to the basic maladjustments which have resulted from France's stubborn defense of its exchange parity. Unlike London and New York, Paris is not highly vulnerable to an assault by international speculators. The amount of foreign short-term funds invested in France is small, while its gold reserves of five and a half billion dollars are more than sufficient to pay off all conceivable external demands. Although French trade is badly out of balance, exports play a far less important role in the French national economy than in that of any of the other major powers. There is a budget deficit of six billion francs, but this is of political rather than financial significance at the moment. If these considerations alone were affecting the situation, it would be a foregone conclusion that France would survive the present crisis as it has all previous ones. But each "victory" of the franc tends to accentuate the basic deflationary forces which have been in operation since the latter part of 1931. The downward trend of wholesale prices remains unchecked, though the cost of living continues relatively high. The recent increase in the discount rate from 2½ to 4 per cent will place an additional strain on business which may cause it to reconsider its opposition to devaluation. Meanwhile, the political unrest is likely to become more pronounced. Unless the Flandin Cabinet can gain the support of the entire Radical Socialist Party and prevent further defections on the right, it appears to be doomed. With both the right and the left demanding a "strong" government to meet the economic crisis, a bitter political conflict appears to be imminent which may threaten the very foundations of the republic.

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ACCOMPANIED by the usual fanfare of publicity, the Ford Motor Car company has raised its minimum wage from $5 to $6 a day and given a small increase to workers in the higher-paid categories. As a result Mr. Ford is once more being held up for approbation as the true apostle of the gospel of high wages—America's answer to the "isms" of Europe. Although the increase is doubtless a genuine one and may be welcomed as a sign of better times in the automobile industry, the satisfaction which it engenders should not blind us to the fact that Ford's labor policies remain among the most reactionary in the country. No other large corporation is so ruthless in weeding out its older employees; none furnishes less protection against the hazards of unemployment and age; and none is so uncompromising in its opposition to labor organizations. While daily wages in the automobile industry have been considerably higher than the average for the United States as a whole, they have been more than offset by the extremely high cost of living in Detroit and by the notorious irregularity of employment in the industry. The recent NRA investigation showed that, excluding the Packard Company, which has maintained remarkably stable employment conditions, approximately 70 per cent of the automobile workers received less than $1,200 in 1934, while a third obtained less than $800. Something more fundamental than a change in the daily wage rate is needed to put the industry on a sound basis.

THE DUNCKEL BILL has passed the lower house of the Michigan legislature, though in greatly modified form, and at this writing awaits the Governor's signature. As originally approved by the Senate on April 24, the bill provided a penalty of from one to fourteen years' imprisonment or a $5,000 fine or both for "advocating overthrow of the government," which clause covered such acts as belonging to or aiding radical organizations or possessing literature sponsored or published by them. The amended bill, as passed by the House, is little more than a repetition of the Michigan criminal-syndicalism law of 1916. The following paragraph, obviously put in in response to public protest, is a bit reassuring though quite inconsistent with the rest of the bill: "Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit or abridge the right of free speech, liberty of the press, or in any manner interfere with or limit the right of peaceful picketing and striking." Despite this change, the bill is unnecessary and dangerous, and only offers another chance for misguided patriots to harass honest critics of the status quo.

THE NEW YORK *HERALD TRIBUNE,* in reporting the story of Hitler's speech on May 22, attached a headline that should become a classic. *Der Reichsführer,* said the *Herald Tribune* in what looked like forty-eight-point type, "Would Humanize War"! This, we advance, is a contradiction in terms unparalleled in headline history. There seems to be a popular misconception, chiefly among persons who were several miles back of the front lines in the last war, that to be killed neatly by a rifle bullet or run through with a clean bayonet thrust was more cheering and comfortable than to be generally messed up with dum-dum bullets, bombs, or poison gas; in other words, that war conducted on a high moral plane, with only the weapons of gentlemen, is a "humanitarian" activity, and war which employs certain other weapons is "inhuman" and should not be allowed by the rules of the game. It is unfortunately true that soldiers killed by one method are just as dead as those destroyed by another; and civilians who meet their end by means of bombs dropped from the air or from disease germs dispensed by a ruthless enemy die in no worse cause than if they had been slain in an orthodox manner on the field of honor. There is no way to "humanize" war. War is in its essence inhuman, cruel, and barbaric, and the choice of weapons is a trivial matter.

FOR YEARS New York City has been paying excessive electric rates. The average rate charged by Consolidated Gas for fifty kilowatt hours a month is 6.10 cents a kilowatt hour. The New York Power Authority claims that Consolidated could make a net 6 per cent profit by charging an average of 3.77 cents a kilowatt hour, while Mayor LaGuardia says that his proposed municipal "yardstick plant" could produce power for 2.31 cents. On this basis the new schedule which Consolidated has filed with the Public Service Commission is farcical. Families which use ten kilowatt hours or less—those for whom the electric bill is the greatest burden—continue to pay 10 cents a kilowatt hour, with a minimum of $1. There is a reduction of 5 cents for those with a monthly bill of $2, and of 10 cents for those paying $3 a month. Only commercial and wholesale consumers obtain any real benefit; for large business users the savings may exceed 50 per cent. The case of Consolidated has been greatly weakened by the recent findings of the City Affairs Committee's subcommittee on utilities. Dr. John Bauer, chairman of the subcommittee and director of the American Utilities Bureau, says that his survey shows that not more than 42 per cent of Consolidated's plant is really efficient, and that about 18 per cent is obsolete. He charges that this state of affairs is deliberately maintained in order to keep the valuation up and the rates high. One good way of putting an end to this gouging is to build a municipal "yardstick."

SPEAKING before the fifty-sixth annual meeting of the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters, Cardinal O'Connell once again urged his flock not to be ashamed of poverty and to be particularly careful "not to fight with our neighbors and call names and stir uprisings and create discontent in the hearts of the poor." His Eminence was obviously aiming at Father Coughlin. Our dislike for the Detroit demagogue does not make the homilies of the Boston archbishop any more palatable. He is the most reactionary of the four cardinals in the United States. In the more than fifty years of his priesthood he has not said one word in support of the unprivileged in the economic struggle. He has opposed the child-labor amendment, the birth-control movement, every attempt to liberalize the preposterous censorship laws of Boston. And he has never uttered a protest against political corruption in his city, though he must have known that members of his church were responsible for much of it. He has been a champion of improved public morals, but by that he meant little more than that women should wear longer dresses and use less rouge. The world has passed him by without making any impression on his Bourbon mind. No wonder that the intelligent Catholics of Boston are embarrassed when the name of Cardinal O'Connell is mentioned.

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Father Coughlin at the Garden

"MY friends, if we are forced to see $19 or even $50 a month paid for such [relief] work in what we call the New Deal, then this plutocratic capitalistic system must be constitutionally voted out of existence." This sentence, apparently interpolated in Father Coughlin's Madison Square Garden speech, since it does not appear in the full texts as published in both the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* is the most revealing utterance in that address. According to the *Times,* "there was a moment's silence as these words sank into the consciousness of the crowd. Then a roar broke out and lasted with almost deafening intensity for one full minute." The crowd of more than 20,000 middle-class individuals—they had paid from 50 cents to $2 for their seats—was roaring at the prospect of the abolition of capitalism. What does it mean? To Father Coughlin? To these middle-class people?

If the plutocratic capitalistic system is to be voted out of existence, something is to replace it. Father Coughlin only intimated what it might be. It will be another capitalistic system, since communism has a "hatred of God and of private property." "Civilization," he said, "cannot prosper unless the natural right to private property is protected." It will be based ostensibly on the solidarity of laborer, farmer, soldier, and merchant, working together for God and for country. Small manufacturers also will have a place in it. It will be conducted on behalf of this group, in opposition to the interests of bankers and big industry. And its chief delight will be in the control of money. Aside from the *idée fixe* of money, a peculiarity of American middle-class radicalism, this conception is almost identical with the underlying idea of national socialism in Germany and of fascism in Italy in the years before they came into power. The union of laborer, farmer, soldier, and merchant might have been culled from Mussolini's speeches before the march on Rome. Hitler appealed for a similar national concentration, and spoke as disrespectfully of big industrialists and even more so of bankers, since most of them were Jews. And it is significant that Father Coughlin made his well-timed entry into Madison Square Garden with an escort from the National War Veterans' Association. As the patron saint of the bonus he becomes the political leader of common soldiers, as were Hitler and Mussolini.

Now Father Coughlin did not speak as a fascist, and he opened his speech by repudiating fascism and communism. He did not repudiate democracy; on the contrary this word, strangely missing from earlier discourses, was sprinkled profusely through the address. He has learned a good deal since the Union for Social Justice was born in his mind. He now knows it is good policy to espouse democracy and denounce dictatorships. Possibly his close friend Mr. Hearst has taught him that. Similarly he has purged his utterances of innuendoes against the American Federation of Labor, which he used formerly to attack with as much scorn as he showed toward the bankers. The A. F. of L. has even been promoted to be one of the spokes of the social wheel of which the National Union for Social Justice is to be the hub.

A year ago he wanted to protect labor from the A. F. of L. and place the organization and direction of labor unions under government control without the right to strike. Now he supports the Wagner labor-disputes bill, and when Senator Wagner, a veteran in the fight for labor, was booed for his stand against the bonus, the freshman labor recruit patronized him: "Give him a chance, ladies and gentlemen, give him a chance. He has taken up the cause of labor." This intellectual dishonesty is characteristic of the demagogic method. Father Coughlin was careful to say he did not aspire to office, and was "forever precluded" from it by being a priest. He also urged the members of his league to work within their existing parties. No doubt he will use this approach to power as long as it succeeds. His union might even rule through existing democratic machinery after it gained control of the country, and Father Coughlin might be dictator without portfolio. The forms are not what matters. What is important is the conflict that lies ahead, and how it is settled. Father Coughlin, aiming at a capitalism based on private property, says he will wrest power from big industry and finance. If his following grows, as similar movements did in Germany and Italy, it will ultimately make its peace with big industry and finance, and if it obtains control we shall be ruled by the same kind of fascist oligarchy.

It is a coincidence that Father Coughlin should have been speaking in New York on the same day that President Roosevelt was delivering a personal veto before Congress. The people, in electing a President, intrust to a single individual the right of veto over acts of Congress. In Washington the President was exercising this right legitimately, and we think wisely, in overruling the Patman bill. But the point we wish to stress is that Father Coughlin was asking on the same day for a veto power which is not legitimate. The "national lobby" idea has no place in our scheme of government. For Father Coughlin's union is not a lobby in any accepted sense; it is a party which refuses to accept the responsibilities and hazards of an open struggle for political power. The "pressure" system enables Father Coughlin to remain vague, to choose his own time and place for public and radio appearances, beyond the reach of questions, debate, and popular repudiation. Father Coughlin told his New York audience he would not make his union a third party. We should consider him a menace if he did; but he is a far more serious menace if he does not.

Hitler's National Socialist Party was more democratic in that it presented itself repeatedly at the polls, and finally came into power through the front door. Father Coughlin artfully stays at the back door, ready to make a short cut to the dais. His Union for Social Justice is a piece of effrontery, as disquieting as it is arrant. And we can only regret that the President, who also must be disquieted since he finds it advisable to make concessions to this man, has not disarmed him and the other demagogues by himself assuming the leadership of the left.

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Can Hitler Be Trusted?

ON the surface Hitler's speech before the Reichstag on May 21 was far more conciliatory than anyone had been led to expect. Considering the recent evidence of war fever within the Reich, it is difficult to see how any German statesman could have been more emphatic in his assertions of peaceful intent. He declared that National Socialism was by its very nature opposed to national assimilation, and rejected current theories of economic nationalism as unsound and mischievous. He indicated that Germany was willing to participate in a multilateral air agreement, that it would favor an understanding which would outlaw the bombing of civilians in war time, that it was ready to conclude non-aggression pacts with individual neighboring states and to enter a general disarmament agreement. He even intimated, somewhat unexpectedly, that Germany would continue to respect the Rhineland demilitarized zone, provided France did not mass troops on the border.

Whether these concessions spring from a genuine desire for peace or merely from the hope of averting the complete diplomatic isolation of the Reich can only be judged, however, after examining the negative aspects of the speech. Despite his conciliatory tone, Hitler gave no indication of compromising on essentials. His references to Austria, while studiously correct, reaffirmed by implication the Nazi position that the Austrians are Germans who are unfortunately at the moment under foreign occupation. Even his assurances with regard to the German population of Switzerland scarcely carried weight in view of his earlier statement about the preeminent importance of national distinctions. More serious was the deliberate omission of Lithuania from the list of countries with which Germany is willing to conclude non-aggression pacts. While Hitler was careful to point out that this does not mean that Germany intends to resort to war to recover Memel, the implication is none the less obvious.

Most disquieting of all was the *Führer's* vigorous rejection of the proposed Eastern security pact. No reference was made to the offer which was conveyed to Stresa for adherence to such a pact providing it did not involve a pledge of assistance on the part of Germany. Instead, Hitler seized the opportunity to launch a vehement attack on bolshevism, stressing the essential incompatibility between the internationalism of the Comintern and the nationalism of the Nazis. Even the statement of Germany's willingness to conclude non-aggression pacts with neighboring countries is open to a dual interpretation in view of the fact that Russia does not actually adjoin Germany. There is, in other words, nothing in Hitler's latest statement which is inconsistent with the war aims revealed in "Mein Kampf." His plan then as now was to maintain pacific relations with France and the Western powers until after the conquest of the Ukraine had been completed.

No fair-minded person will question Germany's right to as much armament as any other country. Nor will he deny that the Reich has been unjustly treated since the close of the World War. If Hitler were sincere in his professions of peaceful intent, it would obviously be the duty of the former Allied nations to meet him halfway in working out a security arrangement that would be an effective compromise of the varying points of view. But when the responsible leader of a great nation declares he wants peace yet gives no indication of abandoning his previously announced program of aggression, there is no reason why his plea should be heeded. Hemmed in on all sides by enemy states, it is natural that Hitler should try desperately to make a breach in the wall of the opposition. By adopting an apparently friendly attitude toward Germany's western neighbors and attacking the Soviets as destroyers of civilization, he hopes against hope that he can break the ever-tightening ring that surrounds him. These tactics are essentially the same as those used unsuccessfully in the conversation with Simon and Eden, except that they are more subtle and therefore more dangerous. Far from being an indication that the battle for collective security is lost, they may be taken as evidence that Germany is definitely on the defensive and will ultimately be compelled to accept the only terms on which war can be averted.

Behind the Czecho-Slovak Election

THE National Socialist success which marked the recent elections in Czecho-Slovakia was the result less of economic than of racial conditions in that young republic. National Socialism in Czecho-Slovakia is a new phase of the old conflict between the Czech and the German elements in the population. Conrad Henlein, its leader, is the standard bearer of as variegated a political army as one can imagine, held together by one absorbing idea—desire for a pan-German state and hatred of a regime which has ousted the Germans from their position of political supremacy. In the first years of their existence as a nation the Czechs demonstrated their new-won liberty by oppressive measures against the Germans, from whose national and racial arrogance they had suffered so many humiliations in the past. Germans were ousted from government positions, and the Czech tongue, one of the most difficult in all Europe, was made the official language.

Under the rule of President Masaryk much of this resentment on the part of the Czechs, normally a good-humored and kindly people, has disappeared. In 1927 the government gave official expression to the new tendency by inviting all parties to send their representatives to a Czecho-German coalition Cabinet, stipulating only that they recognize and uphold the Czecho-Slovakian state. The resulting regime united the German and Czech Agrarian parties, bourgeois democrats of both nationalities, and Czech and German branches of the Social Democracy in a government that functioned harmoniously enough. The intransigent national-minority groups which continued to deny the right to existence of the Czecho-Slovakian state remained outside—the Slovak People's Catholic Party, the Hungarian Christian Socialist Party, and some smaller German nationalist groups. The Communist Party likewise divorced itself from the new regime, though not, of course, for nationalist reasons.

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The harmony with which these diverse elements have cooperated for the last seven years was rudely shattered by the elections of May 19. The extraordinary vote piled up by the German nationalist bloc calls for a new political arrangement. The German contingent in parliament, the German Agrarian League and the German Social Democratic Party, with two and three ministers respectively in the Cabinet, paid dearly for Henlein's victory. Today these parties represent but a fraction of the German population of the country. On the other hand, it is clearly impossible for the fascist Sudeten Deutsche Heimatsfront, which is fundamentally opposed to the Czech state, to be given the place in the national government that it has the right to demand as the party polling the largest vote. On the day after the election Premier Malypetr stated that the government would announce its plans for a new Cabinet at once, but it is unlikely that there will be any fundamental change in its make-up. The Prime Minister, whose Czecho-Slovak Agrarian Party was one of the few to gain votes in the election, will undoubtedly continue at the head of the government, and Dr. Eduard Benes, whose political organization suffered material losses in the election but whose influence in international affairs has made him almost indispensable as Foreign Minister, will also retain his Cabinet post.

Will the victory of Henlein's Nazis mean the beginning of the end of Czecho-Slovakian democracy? Any prediction now would be premature. So long as the eighty-five-year-old Masaryk remains President of the republic there is little likelihood of such a development. Thirty years ago Masaryk, who is Hitler's next-door neighbor in Europe, combated anti-Semitism and racial anarchism as "an outrage on common sense and humanity." Thirty years ago he fought for democracy as "the only just instrument of civilized, self-governing peoples." Today, at the end of a long life of intellectual and cultural achievement, this university teacher in the presidential chair remains the most reliable bulwark against a rising flood of anti-Semitic nationalism. Benes, the strong man of Czecho-Slovakia, might with the backing of a powerful political organization fill Masaryk's place, but this eventuality has been made more doubtful by the results of the recent elections.

If the Henlein front, strengthened by a growing Czech fascist movement, should become a political power in the Czech republic, it would mean serious complications in the European situation. That the Czech fascist party, led by General Gajda, succeeded in its first campaign in capturing six mandates in important industrial and agricultural districts is no good omen for the future. Czecho-Slovakia combines a thriving industrial economy in the German districts with a prosperous agriculture. But experience has taught that agrarian populations are easily won for fascist ideas.

As a last resort the democratic government may establish an authoritarian government in the hope of forestalling a Nazi regime. This experiment has been tried before, is being tried at present by the tiny Duchy of Luxembourg. Or a fascist Putsch may take the government out of the hands of Masaryk and Benes. Such a development would automatically dissolve the newly made alliance with the Soviet bloc. Should this happen, the prospects for peace in Europe would be very slight.

Bent Twigs

ANNUALLY at this season the senior classes in various American colleges count noses to determine the prevailing opinion on matters intellectual, social, and political. The results are calculated to reassure conservative elders, since this prevailing opinion—at least in the older, more dignified institutions—is usually what is called "sound" and offers little indication that the average senior has been in any significant respect differentiated from those members of his age and class group who have not received whatever the benefits of a college education may be.

Not all Princeton professors were Princeton trained, and those who were not must have felt somewhat discouraged by the results of this year's poll there, since it hardly indicated that the taste of the majority of the students had been influenced to any considerable extent by academic teaching. Kipling's "If" was the favorite poem of a large majority, with the "Rubaiyat" and Gray's "Elegy" as the nearest, but still rather distant, competitors. Noel Coward was regarded as the supreme dramatist by 135 of these bachelors of art, while only 107 thought that Shakespeare had the edge on him and only 79 put O'Neill above both. Rembrandt lacked one vote to tie with McClelland Barclay, a magazine-cover artist, for the position of supreme painter of all time, and by a two-to-one vote "Anthony Adverse" was judged superior to "Tom Jones," behind which "Tale of Two Cities" trailed at no very great distance. In this last connection it is worth while to note that the Dickens novel nearly always turns up a large vote in such polls, presumably for the reason that it is usually read in high schools and seems to be the only "standard" novel whose name the voters can remember.

By comparison Barnard College showed up pretty well. A refreshing candor is revealed in the confession that men constitute the most interesting subject to the majority and that the most absorbing activities are fun, literature, social problems, material success, and marriage. The most important men since 1918—not necessarily, it would appear, the most admirable—were Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, and Lenin, with Huey Long toward the end of the list and just above Mickey Mouse. All voting were against war; the Pulitzer prize play did not even get mentioned in the list of favorite contemporary dramas; and Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, and Stravinsky came before Jerome Kern, the most admired composer of popular music. The *Times* was the favorite newspaper in a list which placed the *Herald Tribune* second and ended with the *American* and the *Daily Worker*. Champagne was the favorite drink, but the Barnard *Quarterly*, which reported the poll and which wished a goblet every Sunday to the voters, protested editorially that the provision of *vin ordinaire* for everybody was more important.

Incidentally, most Barnard seniors did not think very highly of Columbia men as prospective husbands. In the interests of harmonious family life we hope, however, that too many of them will not choose Princeton graduates. No Brahms fan is likely to get along very well with a chronic quoter of "If," and it takes more than a mutual love of the *Times* to make a successful marriage.

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Issues and Men

The President's Worst Failure

I CONFESS to being in doubt about what constitutes the President's greatest failure. Sometimes I think that it is in the field of administration. In my judgment the NRA broke down because of the President's inability to get the right kind of administrators, especially after General Johnson was retired, and because of his failure to enforce the law regarding collective bargaining. He not only lacked the right administrators, but he would not steer a direct course in labor matters, and so made it impossible for the administrators he had to carry on vigorously and effectively. A year ago I wrote something to this effect—that I felt the inefficiency of the Administration was menacing the whole New Deal program. Events have borne me out.

Just at present, however, I feel the President's greatest failure is in the matter of standing up for fundamental American rights and liberties. Not one word has come from his lips as yet on these questions that are so vital if our Republic is to endure. He has not singled out a case of official misconduct or denial of civil rights to preach a sermon upon. Were he aware of what is going on, and had he the needed courage, he would certainly devote at least one of his fireside radio talks to this tremendous subject. Yet if he reads the newspapers, he must know what is happening. It certainly cannot be said in his behalf that he was not aware of the fight for the anti-lynching bill, yet he failed to aid it at the vital moment. A word from him, either in the press conference or in a message to Congress, would have broken the filibuster and brought about the passage of the bill. But his heart seems to have failed him.

As a result Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who led the fight for the bill, has written him a blistering letter and handed in his resignation as a member of the Advisory Council for the Government of the Virgin Islands. In this letter Mr. White wrote that he was not unaware of the efforts "which you have made in private conferences with certain Senators to secure a vote by the Congress on the Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill." He then continued as follows:

> I am fully cognizant of the fact that the Democratic leader of the Senate, the Honorable Joseph T. Robinson, would never of his own volition have permitted consideration of the motion to consider the bill and that he did so solely because of your efforts. On the other hand, it is a matter of great disappointment that you as President did not see your way clear to make a public pronouncement by means of a message to the Senate or otherwise, giving your open indorsement to the anti-lynching bill and your condemnation of the shameless filibuster led by a wilful group of obstructionists. . . . It is my belief that the utterly shameless filibuster could not have withstood the pressure of public opinion had you spoken out against it. The Southern press itself took the lead in condemning the crass and unethical means taken . . . to kill the measure.

He added that in justice to the cause that he is serving he could not, with honor, continue to remain "even a small part of your official family." I believe that he took the correct course.

Meanwhile from all over the country come reports of violations of civil liberties, and in not one single case has the President been heard from. Communists are playing this up most effectively, charging that the injured persons are victims of the class war. Socialists of the type of Norman Thomas are similarly pointing out not only that damage is done to the Constitution by these incessant breaches of the sacred document but that they evidence a determination to introduce a form of business fascism. Yet the President is uninterested and silent. What could he not do if he would seize upon one case of violation of these rights! Supposing he were to invite to the White House the woman teacher from Georgia who was thrown into jail last summer for the sole offense of having in her possession copies of *The Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New Masses*, and *Liberty*, and kept there for weeks without redress. Of course the sheriff broke into her house lawlessly, without a warrant. Had the President summoned this woman to Washington and publicly received her and characterized the sheriff's procedure in proper language, every similar official throughout the South would have taken notice. What fun he could have had at the expense of this particular sheriff, who held that *Liberty* was the most dangerous of the four magazines he seized, saying that the *very name* proved that it was a seditious document—this in the United States in 1934!

If this were an isolated case it would be one thing; but it is merely symptomatic. Look at the flood of gag bills, sedition measures, and bills making it impossible for the Communists to appear on the ballot of the several states. The teachers' oath bills now pending in the legislature of Massachusetts and other states would alone furnish a magnificent text for the President in preaching the true doctrine of Americanism. The President is after all the President of *all* the people, even the lowest, and he above all others should feel that the hurt of one is the hurt of us all; that the slightest breach of democracy must be denounced and opposed lest each small breach be followed by larger ones. But the President cannot see it. His own Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Ickes, made a magnificent speech on this subject to the editors of the country at the meeting of the Associated Press in April. They were golden words, admirably spoken and most fittingly voiced in that particular company, but they should have come from the President. Yes, I think that his silence here is his greatest failure. It puts him under suspicion and casts a doubt upon his sense of justice and his loyalty to democracy, against which he ought to be the first to protest.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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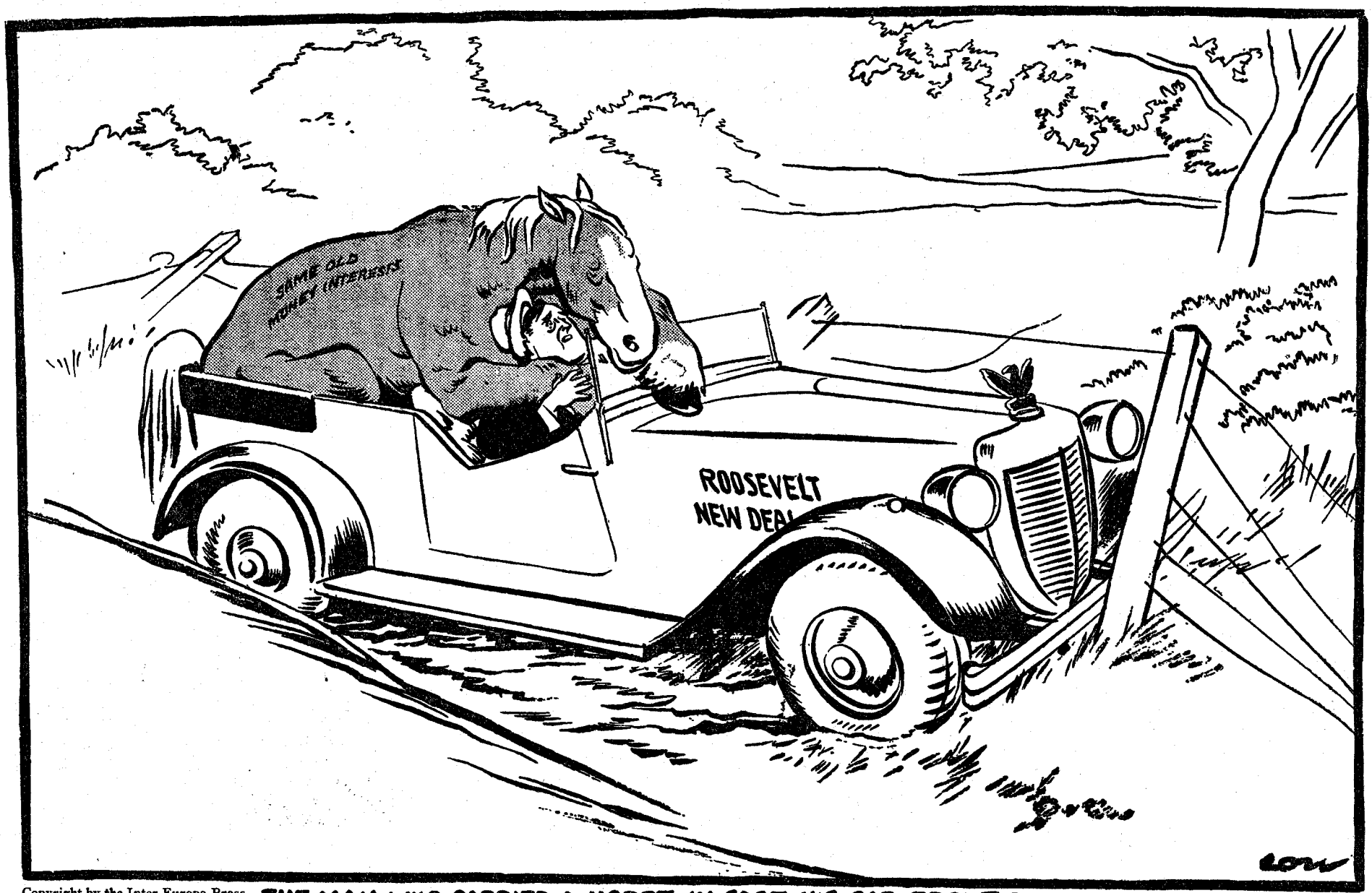
A Cartoon by LOW



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THE MAN WHO CARRIED A HORSE IN CASE HIS CAR BROKE DOWN.

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The Socialist Party Today

By BENJAMIN STOLBERG

NOT only in policy but also in membership the Socialist Party is getting out of the red. On paper it is reviving. Five years ago the party had less than 10,000 members in some 500 locals. Today it has more than 20,000 members in almost 1,000 locals. The number of its liberal sympathizers must have increased correspondingly. As the crisis deepens, the more swank or bohemian or naive revolutionaries in New York are becoming "fellow-travelers" of the Communist Party, whose "infantile leftism" satisfies their craving for social adventure. But the provincial intelligentsia and the lesser professional reformers are apt to follow in the wake of the pink Chautauquas of Norman Thomas. Mr. Thomas enjoys the amorphous distinction of being the leader of an incalculable following. His adherents are practically all of the Splendid Character type—liberal rabbis, modernist ministers, settlement workers, intransigent pacifists, just-awakening college youth, progressive educators, good-government addicts, and a lot of just decent bewildered folk.

The prize exhibit of American socialism in office is of course Milwaukee. There the Hoan administration has been running for years the steadiest and smoothest good-government machine in American history. In Milwaukee we have what the late Morris Hillquit, with his exquisite cynicism, called "sewer socialism" in perfect flower. The sewer system of Milwaukee, he said, is the best in the world. In every way Milwaukee is a model city of Socialist integrity for capitalist safety. Milwaukee cops never frame innocent women and they show a comradely courtesy to pickets who don't block the traffic. And, needless to say, the city budget is the best balanced in America. In Bridgeport, Connecticut, Mayor Jasper McLevy is engaged in similar municipal Marxism. Comrade McLevy is a homespun rebel, a Scotchman who fancies himself a bit of a Connecticut Keir Hardie in his rank-and-file haberdashery. He takes great pride in his revolutionary horse sense, which keeps his Socialist enthusiasm from soaring above sound city finance and the honest collection of municipal garbage. Last November Mr. McLevy helped to elect three state senators and two state representatives, and he himself made a very respectable run for governor against Governor Cross.

Milwaukee and Bridgeport are the bright spots in American political socialism, but they are not the only ones. Almost every biennial national election sweeps into office one or two state legislators in Pennsylvania or an occasional mayor or councilman in some Wisconsin hamlet. Politically the party proves, with infinite patience, "the inevitability of gradualness in the conquest of revolutionary power."

But in the overwhelming majority of states the Socialist parties are paper organizations confined to the letter heads of volunteer secretaries. Nevertheless, at this moment the Socialist Party everywhere displays considerable excitement. Most of this excitement reflects a growing split between the right and left wings of the party, but some of it is also the thrill of expectancy which the party invariably experiences, especially in states with a populist tradition, whenever there are rumblings of a national third-party movement. Then the Socialist tail-enders in these populist states always hope for some miracle which may enable them to wag the populist dog. This attitude of being the Marxian rear, instead of the vanguard, of the progressive movement is always rationalized by the comrades west of the Hudson as the "Americanization" of the party, for obviously few things are more natively American than the recurrent populist movements from President Jackson to Governor Olson. At such a time these Western comrades more or less rebel against what seems to them the alien socialism of New York City, a rebellion not untinged with nativist chauvinism. What really annoys the provincial Socialists is that in New York even the latest expression of Bryanism is not considered a sound expression of the class struggle, and that the ghost of Sockless Jerry Simpson is not confused with the memory of Friedrich Engels. Of course, there is a world of truth in the contention that Marxism in America must be naturalized. But that is no reason for confusing the various lower-middle-class farmer-labor and progressive movements with modern socialism. It is this historic incompatibility between the imported canned Marxian orthodoxy of New York and the "native" populism of our Midwestern Socialists which has kept the party from being a unified national movement.

There is no doubt that the heart of the Socialist movement beats in New York City. More than one-tenth of the national membership is there. Most of it is in the A. F. of L. unions, practically all of it in the needle trades. These Socialist tailors are rather indifferent in their party devotion. They pay their dues if they can, they turn out for the annual May Day parade, and they vote for Thomas, Waldman, and Solomon unless their "Socialist" leaders for reasons of industrial strategy decide to knife these faithful musketeers in favor of Roosevelt, Lehman, or LaGuardia. Hence, the astonishing fluctuations in the Socialist vote of the city. As a matter of fact, the party in New York is infinitely weaker than are its peripheral and completely autonomous institutions. The richest and most reactionary of these is the *Jewish Daily Forward,* which is a non-profit-making cooperative newspaper nowadays specializing in slandering the Soviet Union. The *Forward* endows or subsidizes various Socialist activities, such as the Debs radio station, whose limited range is almost entirely confined to discussions of "good government." Another powerful Socialist auxiliary is the Workmen's Circle, a Jewish workmen's benevolent society whose energies are also expended mostly in bitter denunciations of Stalin as being not one whit better than a fascist.

Then, of course, there is the Rand School of Social Science—combination cafeteria, bookstore, research department, and Marxian Cooper Union, where courses on dialectic materialism are lightened by lectures on musical appreciation. The president of the Rand School is Algernon Lee, the theoretical leader of the Old Guard, a Midwestern Yankee by birth and training, but a Babylonian Talmudist by nature.

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The other elder statesman is Jim Oneal, editor of the *New Leader*, who was raised next door to Gene Debs in Terre Haute and is today a sort of Hoosier Kautzky. The third leader of the Old Guard, Louis Waldman, is the chairman of the New York State party. He is a very successful lawyer in his early forties, a man of character and great energy, and he is a Socialist from mere habit. His social philosophy would be about the same as that of the La Follettes were it not for the psychological fact that whenever a Socialist leader permits himself to be driven to the right, he tends to become emotionally a socialist Bourbon.

The most vital elements in the party are the Young People's Socialist League and the League for Industrial Democracy, which works in the colleges. Under the splendid radical vitality of Mary Fox, the League for Industrial Democracy has brought about a healthy change in the hitherto Philistine attitude of a great many undergraduates. The L. I. D. is also subsidizing the revolutionary traveling fellowship of Mr. Thomas and the research work of Dr. Harry W. Laidler, the latter of whom lays a book on industrial democracy and the good life every other year.

Yet for all these institutional activities the Socialist Party is decomposing. The reasons are various. For one thing, American socialism received a mortal blow when the aftermath of the Russian Revolution split the Socialist parties the world over. After that the American branch underwent the deterioration which the European Socialist parties had undergone, but with the enormous difference that American socialism has never had any experience of power. Norman Thomas is the respectable radical zero he is because, unlike the Scheidemanns and MacDonalds, he has never achieved political office. In other words, just as the Communist Party in the United States reflects the rudimentary gestures of the Russian Revolution without either its content or its meaning, and hence is a mere burlesque of Russian communism, so the Socialist Party reflects the spiritual corruption of West European socialism without its high tragic significance. Unlike the German Social Democracy or the British Labor Party, our Socialist Party is not a party of revolutionary compromise. It is merely a caricature of revolutionary compromise engaged in a war of shadow attrition with the equally ludicrous Communist Party.

When Social Democracy was in power in Germany, Ebert, Scheidemann, and Noske were busy shooting revolutionary workingmen. All Abraham Cahan of the *Forward* can do is encourage its labor reporter, Harry Lang, to tell lies about the Soviet Union in the Hearst press. Ramsay MacDonald *could* join a "National Government" of social reaction. Norman Thomas, no matter how opportunistic, has no such opportunity. American socialism cannot be used as a political smoke screen by American capitalism, for it has nothing to sell—no power, no influence, no social orientation. And it has nothing to sell fundamentally because it has never functioned as a real *political* movement.

It is true that the Socialist Party has appeared officially on the ballots for more than thirty years. But the party was never organized for the conquest of Socialist power. Even in its heyday it never enjoyed a parliamentary representation. Victor Berger and Meyer London served long terms in Congress as mere progressives. The fact is that the main service of the Socialist Party in the past has always been that of a benevolent parasite in the body of our organized labor movement. For years it has really been His Majesty's opposition to Samuel Gompers in the A. F. of L. In almost every union local throughout the country, in the state federations of labor, in the national labor bodies, in the annual conventions of the A. F. of L. and the various railroad brotherhoods, the Socialist delegates forced our pure and simple trade unionism to adopt such progressive measures as workmen's compensation and the Plumb plan. The American Socialist Party has always been more reformist than its European counterpart for the reason that the American organized labor movement has been a strictly reformist trade unionism. And when the reform labor movement plainly reached its uttermost limits under monopoly capitalism, when even Section 7-a failed to revive it, then naturally the inner opposition of the Socialist Party within the trade-union movement also died. The present conflict between the Old Guard and the so-called "militants" in the party, confused by the third-party hopes of the Midwestern Socialists, is nothing but a symptom of the disintegration of the role of the Socialist Party in the trade-union movement.

The militants are a group of young people of Communist leanings who find it impossible to work within the Communist Party. They wish to work within the trade-union movement, which they hope to transform into a modern industrial unionism and to force into political action. In the center, between the Old Guard and these young militants, stand the municipal Socialists—Hoan of Milwaukee, McLevy of Bridgeport, Darlington Hoopes, a state representative from Reading, Pennsylvania. They are playing with the vague pacifist leftism of Norman Thomas, a man of extraordinary ideological confusion, whose social decency is constantly nullified by his political weakness.

At the last national convention of the party in Detroit the militants, the municipal Socialists, and the Thomasites formed a temporary "left" coalition, captured the National Executive Committee, and forced through the convention a new Declaration of Principles. The controversial issue between them and the Old Guard is contained in the following passage of the declaration:

> They [the Socialists] will loyally support, in the tragic event of war, any of their comrades who for anti-war activities or refusal to perform war services come into conflict with public opinion or the law. . . . They [the Socialists] will meet war and the detailed plans for war already mapped out by the war-mapping arms of the government by massed war resistance. . . . It [the Socialist Party] unhesitatingly applies itself to the task of replacing the bogus democracy of capitalist parliamentarism by a genuine workers' democracy. . . . If the capitalist system should collapse in a general chaos and confusion, which cannot permit of orderly procedure, the Socialist Party, whether or not in such case it is a majority, will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under the workers' rule.

This Declaration of Principles was fashioned as a compromise by Mr. Thomas and written by his man Friday, Devere Allen, a Gandhi pacifist. As social theory it sounds like a monologue by Joe Cook. It is merely revolutionary phrase-mongering. The first part of the declaration encourages mass conscientious objection to war with an air of advocating the transformation of an international war into civil war. Through such intransigent pacifism, it seems, the Socialist Party would come into power with the aid of "a

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genuine workers' democracy," which is Thomas's paraphrase of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Just how one can achieve a revolutionary coup d'état, if that's what the declaration is talking about, with a pacifist industrial democracy as a weapon we are not told. Indeed, the ideological nonsense packed into these few sentences would tax the genius of a political Lewis Carroll. But even more ludicrous is Mr. Thomas's promise "not to shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under the workers' rule." The simple fact is that Mr. Thomas's essential liberalism has already been tested in Washington by Mr. Roosevelt since March 4, 1933. The tragi-comedy of the Socialist Party is really that the New Deal is doing pretty much what it would be doing were it in office.

When pressed by the Old Guard to state just what this Declaration of Principles really meant, Mr. Thomas admitted that he didn't really know and that the section was being referred to three lawyers for their expert opinion. In short, Mr. Thomas was going to find out whether it was legal to be a revolutionist.

But this sham battle between the Old Guard and the militants is none the less shaking the party. A national referendum upheld the Declaration of Principles. But of the 10,865 who voted on the declaration, nearly 45 per cent voted with the Old Guard. The New York State party, under the leadership of Louis Waldman, refuses to abide by the referendum. At the present moment there is a possibility that the New York State party may be outlawed by the National Executive Committee, which means that the Socialist Party will decapitate itself. Since the National Executive Committee under Mr. Thomas's leadership is not likely to be as decisive as that, the chances are that this tempest in a teapot will go on until the pot is dry.

[*This critical analysis of the Socialist Party will be followed in later issues by similar discussions of the Communist Party and other organized factions of the left.*]

The Roads to Rome

By M. W. FODOR

Vienna, May 10

DURING the month of June all the Central European countries, including Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugoslavia, Rumania, and Poland, and also France and Italy will meet in Rome to discuss the creation of a Danubian pact designed to assure the independence of Austria and maintain peace. The chief sponsor of the conference is Signor Mussolini, who wishes especially to see Austria guaranteed against the menace expressed in the expansionist aims of Germany. It will be the most important of all the conferences held for this purpose; and Mussolini hopes that it will achieve more than did its many predecessors which also aimed at a new stability in the Danube basin. No conference can undo the evils which the breaking up of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy caused in Central Europe; Rome may, however, bring an alleviation.

Much talk about the "debasing dictates of the Versailles peace treaty" has been heard recently in connection with Germany's move to repudiate the military clauses of the treaty. But stupid as the Versailles treaty was, it was a work of genius compared to the obtuse and senseless St. Germain treaty, which dismembered the old Austrian Empire. The historian Francis Palacky, who, being a Czech, could hardly be accused of overwhelming sympathies for the Hapsburg empire, wrote ninety years ago that if Austria did not exist it would have to be invented or created. Since Germany became aggressively expansive under Hitler the powers have been faced with the task of finding a workable substitute for the unity they recklessly destroyed.

When Clemenceau decided to dismember the old Hapsburg monarchy, which even before the war undoubtedly had become derelict, he believed that by this move he would destroy forever the greatest potential ally of Germany. But the small countries created in the place of the former unit of 55,000,000 people opened an even easier way to Germany for expansion toward the south and the southeast, and for the last four years all the energies and abilities of the leading French and Italian statesmen have been required to prevent Austria from falling a prey to Germany.

The first positive step toward *Anschluss* was the abortive customs-union scheme of Schober and Curtius in 1931. This clever yet diplomatically inept plan on the part of Germany filled the French with fright, and they precipitated the failure of the Creditanstalt in Vienna, hoping that such a financial and economic blow would suffice to forestall a move which undoubtedly was intended as a preliminary step toward political union. The failure of the most powerful of Austria's financial institutions, however, not only caused a serious financial and economic crisis in Austria, Germany, and Hungary, but contributed to the departure of Great Britain from gold and seriously aggravated the world economic crisis. Immediately after the proposal of this unfortunate scheme Italy and France tried to find means to unite the smaller Central European states in some form of economic cooperation which would serve as a counterpoise to Germany's expansion. While the union of a democratic Germany and Austria, both disarmed, was an idea which appealed to liberal-minded people and might seem to constitute no real danger to peace, the Germany of 1931 was already assuming a more militaristic character; hence the fear of German expansion was not unfounded.

Italy faced the more imminent danger. It had suffered enough from a weak Austria-Hungary; how much more justified, then, were its fears of a neighbor which would have 72,000,000 people and probably the best army on the Continent! France feared the potential increase of the German army by 10 per cent through the inclusion of Austria. And it was obvious that once Germany possessed Austria, Czecho-Slovakia could no longer exist, while Hungary, Jugoslavia, and Rumania, sooner or later, would become mere vassal states of an expanding Germany.

With the ever-increasing power of Hitlerism these fears have become even more justified. If Germany could

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control Austria, she would soon reach not only the Adriatic but also the Aegean; and would eventually conquer Constantinople. Before the war the motto "Berlin to Bagdad" frightened both Russia and Great Britain; today the proud shibboleth has become "Hamburg to Herat" and it has frightened England, Russia, France, and Italy, not to speak of the smaller Balkan states.

To check this expansion Italy, as long ago as May, 1931, proposed to Austria and Hungary a three-cornered pact providing for close economic cooperation through credit facilities and freight-rate reductions—measures aimed at the circumvention of the most-favored-nation clauses in existing trade treaties and the establishment of hidden preferential treatment among the three countries. This Italian scheme was frustrated by the collapse of the Creditanstalt and the consequent economic crisis, which deprived Italy of the funds it needed to lay the corner-stone of such cooperation. France, in turn, proposed the Tardieu plan, evolved under the influence of Benes, Czecho-Slovakia's able Foreign Minister, which Tardieu intended should inaugurate a regime of preferential tariffs among Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugoslavia, and Rumania. Italy and Hungary, however, feared that the Tardieu scheme would give undue influence to France and its allies, and this plan also came to nought. The first famous Stresa conference, called after the reparations congress in Lausanne, in September, 1932, produced useful recommendations which were never put into effect. Two years later Mussolini revived the recommendations of Stresa as the basis for his Danubian plan; and since the rapprochement between France and Italy effected during Laval's visit to Rome, closer economic cooperation between the Central and Southeastern European states has become more likely.

In the meantime, however, the coming to power of Hitler created a nasty situation in Austria itself. With a section of the Austrian population the idea of pan-Germanism was strong even in the days of the pre-war empire. Fifty years ago the Gross-Deutsche demanded that the German parts of Austria should be included in the Hohenzollern empire. The dismemberment of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy increased the number of the friends of *Anschluss;* what before the war had been minor agitation became a clamor. The Social Democrats as well as the reactionary Pan-Germans ardently advocated such a union.

Hitlerism in Germany has cooled the enthusiasm of most of the Social Democrats for the union, but the middle classes and especially the provincial intelligentsia have flocked in large numbers into the camp of the Nazis. Cleverly conducted propaganda, helped by the great monetary resources of Herr Goebbels's office, seems to have made a thorough conquest of certain provinces of western and southern Austria. In March and April, 1933, Austria as an independent state appeared to many to be doomed. But somehow the Nazi élan suddenly lost vigor. It failed to conquer Austria in the months of the first great enthusiasm, and in that time Dollfuss was able to organize the defense against further onslaughts. The summer of 1934, with its bombing outrages and its increased propaganda activity, brought matters to a climax in the coup of July 25. Chancellor Dollfuss died in the Chancellery from a Nazi assassin's bullet; but the Putsch failed and National Socialism received a severe blow. The Putsch provided the Schuschnigg-Starhemberg government which succeeded Dollfuss with an excuse for breaking up the organizations of the Nazis and prosecuting Nazi propagandists as far as was possible in a bureaucracy which itself contained large numbers of National Socialists.

Despite these reverses Germany has not given up hope of the "conquest" of Austria. Hitler made this plain during the Saar plebiscite when he declared to the British police chief in the Saar, Major Hennessy, that Austria must and would be "liberated." Though the three great powers, Great Britain, France, and Italy, had declared on February 17, 1934, and again on September 27 that they guaranteed the independence of Austria, Italy still remained uneasy about the situation. The pact of January 7 of this year between France and Italy brought further assurances in this regard, but Italy was resolved to prepare the way for a Danubian pact which, in its first line, would guarantee Austria's independence in even stronger terms. At the April conference of the French, Italian, and British statesmen in Stresa it was decided, therefore, to call a further meeting in Rome, at which the question of the Danubian pact should be settled with the participation of the interested countries.

In a few weeks' time this conference will assemble under the chairmanship of Mussolini. To further his plans for insuring the independence of Austria, Mussolini has made far-reaching concessions in both the West and the East. It was the question of Austria which forced Italy to bury the hatchet with France. The visit of Laval to Rome in January liquidated all the important outstanding questions which had caused friction between the two countries. It was also the question of Austria which induced Mussolini to seek a rapprochement with Jugoslavia. When the newly appointed Italian Minister in Belgrade presented his credentials to the Regent, Prince Paul, he declared that Italy was ready to respect the territorial integrity and the present unity of Jugoslavia. This declaration dissipated much of the opposition in Jugoslavia to an agreement with Italy. Similarly the Little Entente, which has long regarded Italian policy with deep distrust, has obtained assurances that Italy will not interfere in the Balkans.

To make the Rome conference complete, the support of three other countries must be obtained—Germany, Poland, and Hungary. Italy still hopes that Germany will participate in the conference and will sign a non-interference pact. The participation of Germany, however, is far from certain. On the other hand, Italy has succeeded in winning Polish support for its scheme. The Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, on his way home from Geneva interrupted his journey at Venice for a conference with Signor Suvich, Mussolini's right-hand man in questions of foreign politics. It was agreed that Poland, despite its reluctance to join an Eastern pact, would support the Danubian pact and collaborate in the economic reconstruction of the Danube basin.

Hungary's position is still uncertain. Although a treaty of friendship between Italy and Hungary has existed since 1926, the present government has shown less enthusiasm for the Italian point of view than its predecessor. De Kanya, the Foreign Minister, has even evinced considerable sympathy for the Germany of Herr Hitler. But when Hungary noticed that England and Poland were turning away from Germany, it thought it more prudent to return to

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the old friendship. It is reluctant to enter a treaty based on mutual assistance, but is inclined to sign a non-interference pact if this is concluded on the basis of Hungary's full equality.

These developments on the whole constitute distinct successes for Italian diplomacy; and even though no panacea is likely to emerge from the coming Rome conference, it is at least possible to hope for agreements which will make Austria's external position more secure.

All these guaranties, however, will remain valueless if Austrian independence is not well buttressed from within. Here exists the largest gap in the defenses. The internal situation of Austria today is worse than it was a year ago. Dollfuss's unfortunate policy of fighting a war on two fronts, against both the Socialists and the Nazis, has divided the country into three camps which cannot be united. The natural ally of any government which sincerely wished Austria's independence of Hitler was the Social Democracy, which hated the Nazis more than any other section of the population. But the Social Democracy was destroyed, and although soothing words have been uttered about reconciliation, nothing practical has been done to heal the wounds of the party members. On the contrary, the heavy sentences pronounced on twenty-one leaders of the Socialist armed guards have increased the bitterness of the workers everywhere.

The Nazis are reforming their ranks and are still strong. The government camp, on the other hand, is divided. There are many differences between the various factions in the Fatherland Front, the chief organization of the present clerico-fascist regime. The Heimwehr, which has little support in the country but is a formidable armed force, is striving to gain the supremacy and threatens to break up the last democratic sections of the Front, namely, the Christian Workers' group of Leopold Kunschak and the peasant organization of the Minister of Agriculture, Josef Reither. Yet the peasants are the only remaining real support of the present government, and some of the former Socialists have shown an inclination to cooperate with Kunschak. Napoleon once said that one can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. The Schuschnigg-Starhemberg government, however, rules by sitting on bayonets. If the internal political feuds are healed without any serious shock, the independence of Austria can be maintained for some time, especially with the foreign support which is offered. But if the split in the government ranks should bring about a new clash, the only victor, despite the promised protection of foreign bayonets, will ultimately be German National Socialism.

Hitler over England

By HAROLD J. LASKI

London, May 13

AT a by-election this week in West Edinburgh, the National Government did better than at any time since it assumed office in 1931. Not only was this the case; while the Conservative candidate improved upon his poll of that year, the Labor candidate did worse by thousands than in 1929; and the Liberal candidate, the eminent economist, Sir George Paish, was as usual at the bottom of the poll.

There can, I think, be little doubt that for the moment the position of the National Government in the country is stronger than it has been for a considerable time. Partly this is due to the international situation. The grim European scene has reconciled a good deal of opinion to the need for increased armaments, especially in the air, and it is felt that a program of this kind comes more suitably from a Conservative government than from one of a Labor complexion. Partly, also, it is the outcome of the Jubilee; what ought to be a national celebration, if it was to be celebrated at all, has been given, and successfully, a definite political tinge; for the moment it has persuaded many people that this is no time for a break-up of the coalition. Partly, further, there has been some, though an insubstantial, rise in trade, especially in the luxury industries; and this is reflected in a popular feeling that perhaps the National Government is really a safeguard against the uncertainties a Socialist victory might bring. The fundamental fact is that Hitler has proved a good friend to the National Government. Beside the implied threat of his militarism, Tory policy seems to the man in the street the obvious path of safety.

The man in the street, of course, does not assess the immense responsibility of the National Government for Herr Hitler's policy. He does not realize how largely it is responsible for the torpedoing of the Disarmament Conference; that, to take only one instance, the abolition of bombing from the air would have been almost certainly achieved had it not been for the refusal of the British government to forgo its right to bomb recalcitrant natives in India and Iraq. He does not realize, either, how largely Hitlerite Germany is following the anarchic example of Japan; and how greatly the success of Japan was due to the virtual support afforded her at Geneva by Sir John Simon. He is unaware of the amazing degree to which the National Government lacks any considered policy in national affairs. He only vaguely feels that a Germany based upon conscription, with a great air force and a new navy, is a menace to peace, and he is confident that this government will devote itself to keeping pace with the menace.

It is extremely probable that in the next few months the government will seek to capitalize the implications of this position by a general election; the most eminent of the old parliamentary hands is said to have warned the Labor Party that there will be a "snap" election in July. That would enable all the loyalist emotion of the Jubilee to be fully exploited; early October, which is said to be the more likely date, may be too late for that purpose. I think it probable that, whether the earlier or the later date be chosen, the Labor Party will do less well than it would have done before German policy was so clearly defined. The wave of pacifism which swept England in 1933 has been largely arrested by the implications of the Hitler threat, and it will

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take some very decisive gesture on his part to renew its impetus. As things are, I take an autumn election to mean a pretty substantial Conservative victory. At the worst, indeed, the Labor Party will win 100 seats; but that is little to what it would have won had the mood of last winter continued. Hitler has killed the hope of a progressive England.

It will, of course, be a very different "National Government" from the one now in power. Whether just before or just after the election, Mr. MacDonald will go, and Mr. Baldwin take his place. There will be a new Foreign Secretary; and it is pretty certain that Mr. Thomas and Lord Sankey will find a term put to their political careers. The fate of Mr. Lloyd George is still in the balance. The conversations over his program do not go too well; the departments are said to have displayed its hollowness in gusty memoranda. On the other hand, there is a much keener realization that he would lend a valuable air of vague "progressivism" to the government's domestic policy; and the "man who won the war" is an asset to it in a period of international tension. Mr. Lloyd George, it is thought, could be placated by a move toward a public-works policy; and the disappearance of Sir John Simon from the Foreign Office and Mr. Runciman from the government would, with the coincident exit of Mr. MacDonald, be a sufficient sop to his prestige. Mr. MacDonald will be in the House of Lords, his pride probably assuaged by one of those decorative offices which entail no functions. He has served his purpose, and everyone will be relieved—not least the Tories—when he ceases to embarrass the public scene.

The Labor Party is not in an easy position. In foreign policy any simple and direct opposition to rearmament is no longer possible, and the complexities of its view of collective security as the way to peace have little of the direct emotional appeal that rearmament now makes. On the domestic side, moreover, Labor is attacked on two flanks. The business man and all his dependents are afraid of the disturbance to "confidence" a policy of Socialist reconstruction implies, while the division between Labor and communism will cost the party many more working-class votes than it is willing to admit. I know, I think, as well as most people the futility of Communist Party tactics in the post-war years. I still think it a pity that the Labor Party has not sought, as in France, to rediscover the bases of cooperation with its rival. At present the attitude of Labor is far too much built upon the same confidence that betrayed Social Democracy in Central Europe and Spain, the confidence in the reality of a "community consciousness" that transcends class interest; and there are too many leaders in the party to whom respect for the "principles of the constitution" is of an absolute kind, such as their opponents in the Conservative Party have never displayed. This side of the election, of course, the consideration of relations with the Communists is impossible. But when it is over, I believe events will make it essential; and nothing should so strengthen the forces of the left in Great Britain as the formation of an effective united front. I believe the rank and file of the party are much more prepared for this change than the party machine.

International affairs apart, a good deal of our politics in the next year will depend on what Mr. Roosevelt is able to do between now and his election. If his public-works policy is anything like successful, our government, quite certainly, will be driven to emulate it; and, without going into detailed prophecies, I can imagine that having immense consequences on the alignment of British politicians in the next years. If he fails, I am confident that the Conservative Party will continue its policy of do-nothingness. That will sharpen the distance between parties, and the problems of the next Labor Government will be immensely graver in consequence. No one grasps the implications of our present position who does not realize how largely the prospect of social peace in Europe is dependent on Mr. Roosevelt. For if he is able to make his policy work, there will be a revival of progressivism all over the world. He can dispel the disillusion which is the psychological rampart of fascism, and is the main reason why the average elector, with insecurity about him everywhere, shows so profound a fear of drastic reconstruction. If Mr. Roosevelt fails—which is to say, if he goes conservative in general direction—I do not think anyone can preserve social peace in Europe in the next generation. I hope his radical friends can make him aware of these urgencies in the next twelve months, and I hope they may be led to realize that their own effective unity is the condition without which they cannot convey this awareness.

And this, perhaps, is the note upon which I would venture to insist. No one can look at the world today without an acute sense of its profound interdependence. Great Britain, the United States, Russia, Germany, France, Japan —these can no longer live to themselves alone. It is the tragedy of our epoch that just when this interdependence needs to find its effective institutional expression, the national sovereign state should bar the way to its discovery. This state, in its turn, is the expression of a capitalism whose vested interests hinder at every point the liberation of those productive potentialities which science has brought within our grasp. We have seen the Russian way to that liberation; it is bloody, it is brutal, but it is unquestionably effective. Mr. Roosevelt seems to me the one statesman whose people are, differently from ourselves, still experimental enough to be willing to take the risks an alternative route implies. If he has the big vision to embark upon this adventure, he may change the face of the world by the forces he will unleash. But if he seeks to conciliate the vested interests of America he will find the social peace of Europe among the early victims of his timidity.

Contributors to This Issue

M. W. Fodor is the Vienna correspondent of the Manchester *Guardian*.

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Correspondence

Defense of North American

To the Editors of The Nation:

A. Wilfred May, in an article in *The Nation* for April 17 entitled How the Holding Companies Milk Investors, refers to the North American Company in a critical vein. The article acquires some importance from the fact that it was quoted, or rather misquoted, by Thomas G. Corcoran, counsel for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the Senate in the hearings on the Wheeler bill (S1725). Mr. Corcoran said:

> There is a discussion in there [the Wilfred May article] of the procedure of North American last year, which possibly because there was cash needed in some of the holding companies at the top, above North American, broke its habit of declaring dividends in stock and declared a dividend in cash, leaving the company, as alleged by the author of this article, in a dangerous working-capital position. He also cites the withdrawals of special dividends from the Washington Railway and Electric Company, causing a deficit, by the withdrawal of that cash dividend, in the position of the railway company here.

Mr. Corcoran then submitted the article and it was accepted for the record.

Mr. May did in effect make the statement attributed to him by Mr. Corcoran with regard to the Washington Railway and Electric Company, and it may perhaps be answered first and briefly dismissed. Washington Railway and Electric Company had a corporate income for the year 1934 of $2,358,278.49. Its subsidiary companies had, in addition, net income of $1,292,835.75, which was not declared by them as dividends to the Washington Railway and Electric Company. This was clearly stated in the Annual Report of the company, from which Mr. May presumably obtained his information, and was certified to by the independent auditors of the company's accounts. Mr. May chose to ignore it. But altogether apart from that, his statement is misleading and in part erroneous. He says, "This dividend [that is, the special dividend referred to by Mr. Corcoran] amounting to $1,300,000 caused a deficit in 1934, and reduced the working capital from $2,926,000 to $2,208,000 in a single year." The inference is, obviously, that the "deficit" which was caused by the dividend was $718,000. Actually, however, the dividends paid, as clearly set forth in the Annual Report, amounted to $2,423,750, consisting of $425,000 preferred dividends, $698,750 of regular common dividends, and the special common dividend of $1,300,000. Thus the excess of the total dividends paid over the corporate net income alone for the year was but $65,471.51, surely not a considerable sum for Mr. May, Mr. Corcoran, or the Senate of the United States to become concerned about. After these dividends were paid, the company's surplus amounted to $11,984,577.59. Mr. May did not mention this.

As to working capital, since the Washington Railway and Electric Company has no operations of any kind, it does not need any working capital. It did have an excess of current assets over current and accrued liabilities at December 31, 1934, of $2,208,000. The chief reason that this was less than the corresponding figure at December 31, 1933, apart from the $65,471.51 on which Mr. May's criticism rests, was that the company increased its advances to its subsidiary companies by $553,135.83, in addition to leaving $1,292,835.75 of earnings in its subsidiaries, to which reference has already been made. It would seem that no one has any basis for complaint in this matter.

Coming now to Mr. Corcoran's other statements and the passages in Mr. May's article on which they are based, Mr. Corcoran was in error in saying that Mr. May charged that the cash dividends paid by the North American Company left the company "in a dangerous working-capital position." A glance at the North American Company's consolidated balance sheet at December 31, 1934, shows that the cash, short-term investments, and United States government securities alone had a value of upward of $25,100,000, and other current and working assets had a value of $23,600,000, or a total of $48,700,000 against current and accrued liabilities of $21,768,325. The working-capital position of a utility company in any event is a different matter from that of a manufacturing or trading company. A utility company does not carry an inventory of utility services and the business is much more nearly on a monthly cash basis. When a utility company has a net excess of current and working assets over current and accrued liabilities equal to more than two months' gross operating revenues, as is shown by the consolidated accounts of the North American Edison Company, the company of which Mr. May was really speaking, the situation is pretty well in hand. Neither the North American Company nor North American Edison is in a "dangerous working-capital position," and Mr. May, who presumably has seen the figures, knows it but avoided saying that it was so. The source of Mr. May's figure of $12,000,000 working capital for the North American Edison Company is not clear. The net current assets stated in its Annual Report are $16,483,585, an increase of more than a million dollars during the past year.

The "cushion for the holders of some $393,000,000 of bonds and preferred stock" is not $12,000,000 of working capital as suggested by Mr. May. The $223,576,700 of funded debt and $80,766,000 of preferred stock of subsidiaries of the North American Edison Company are followed by substantial investments in common stock and surplus. As at December 31, 1934, their funded debt represented 46 per cent of total capitalization and surplus, preferred stock 16 per cent, and common stock and surplus, including minority interest, 38 per cent. The $52,754,000 of debentures and $36,766,000 of preferred stock of the North American Edison Company are followed by $89,160,000 of common stock and surplus.

It is interesting to observe the concern which Mr. May and Mr. Corcoran evidence regarding the change in the form of North American dividend payments from stock to cash. The North American Company for many years paid dividends on its common stock solely in common stock. The reason is quite clear and was publicly stated many times. The requirements of the operating subsidiaries for additional capital were great, and the parent company had to be in a position to furnish large amounts of equity capital. It was logical and sound to conserve cash income for investment in the properties and businesses of the subsidiaries, and pay stock dividends. Partly as a result of this policy, the North American Company has maintained a strong financial position throughout the depression. In 1934 the subsidiaries' requirements for new capital were not as great as formerly, and it became apparent that the result of a continuation of the exclusively stock dividend would be an accumulation of cash which could not be profitably employed. Moreover, the stock had an actual asset value of more than $25 a share. Why, then, should stock be issued to a stockholder for him to sell for income purposes at the low level of prices to which utility stocks had been reduced by the antagonistic attitude of the federal government? At first the advisability of a policy of paying part stock and part cash was indicated, and for each of the first three quarters of 1934 a dividend of 1 per cent in stock and 12½ cents per share in cash

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was paid. In declaring the dividend payable on January 1, 1935, the stock dividend of 1 per cent (which when paid in 1934 was worth from 11¾ cents to 25¼ cents per share) was discontinued, and the cash dividend was increased from 12½ cents to 25 cents. The same rate of dividend was paid on April 1, 1935. Replying to Mr. May, therefore, we have "seen fit to double the rate" of cash dividends, as he says. The rate we are paying is still within our income, although, even if it were not, with a balance of $117,000,000 of undivided profits, as shown by our consolidated balance sheet at December 31, 1934, some draft upon surplus would hardly have been open to criticism.

Mr. May shows some solicitude for the 75,860 stockholders in the underlying companies as against the 63,965 stockholders of the parent company who are receiving this dividend. Mr. May must know that the stockholders of the underlying companies are largely preferred stockholders who have been receiving their full dividends regularly year in and year out, while as to the minority common stockholders in those companies, they have received dividends every year at precisely the same rate as the dividends paid to the parent company. Surely, the money invested by the common stockholder in the parent company is also worthy of its hire.

Now as to the dividends paid by the North American Edison Company on its common stock, the point which was perhaps intended by Mr. May as the chief part of his criticism. Mr. May says that North American "took out in common dividends in 1932, 1933, and 1934 amounts far in excess of the available earnings." The figures were shown in the reports, but Mr. May did not give them. They are as follows:

Year	Available for Dividends on Common Stock	Amounts Paid	Excess
1932	$ 6,159,432	$ 6,698,000	$ 538,568
1933	3,979,905	4,728,500	748,595
1934	3,546,508	4,067,000	520,492
	$13,685,845	$15,493,500	$1,807,655

Is Mr. May justified in his statement that the dividends are "far in excess of the available earnings"? In this case we are drawing, and that but to a minor extent, on accumulated savings. The matter is one of proportion. The undivided profits shown by the consolidated balance sheet of the North American Edison Company at December 31, 1934, that is to say, after these dividends were paid, was $40,160,000. The total overdraft for the three years was thus about 4½ per cent of that amount. Conservatism is surely penalized if during a period of reduced earnings the earnings of past years which could properly have been withdrawn as dividends but instead were allowed to remain in the business may not be treated as a backlog to this limited extent.

It has already been shown that this group of companies is in a good current position. It might also be pointed out that during these three years the equity investment in North American Edison has been increased by over $9,100,000, while the debentures of the company have been reduced by $239,000.

There remains one point in Mr. May's article which should perhaps be answered. He says that "the equivalent bonds and preferred stock of the upper holding company have enjoyed a better investment rating than those of the underlying company." It is true that the senior securities of the North American Company sell on a slightly better basis than those of the North American Edison Company, but this is not due in any degree, as Mr. May would imply, to the withdrawal of $1,800,000 from accumulated surplus in the past three years. The difference is due to the appraisal by security analysts of the respective merits of the two groups of securities. The North American Edison Company, it is true, stands between the North American Company and the investments in three important groups of properties centering around St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Cleveland. On the other hand, in addition to its equity in the North American Edison Company, the North American Company controls the group of properties in and around Washington, D. C., and the St. Louis County Gas Company, and has valuable holdings in the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Detroit Edison Company, as well as other investments. The North American Company's dividends from these two last-named investments alone would have been more than sufficient in 1934 to pay the interest on its debentures and the dividend on its preferred stock. Including these items of income, what the analysts call the "over-all coverage" is somewhat greater for both debenture interest and preferred dividends in the case of the North American Company than in the case of the North American Edison Company. This is reflected in the market appraisal.

It is of necessity a much more difficult matter to refute than to make statements, which without supporting data cover so much territory with the sweep of a few words. That is the explanation for the length of this reply. In view of the prominence given to Mr. May's article, with special reference to the North American Company, I trust you will see your way to print this reply in your columns.

New York, May 1 J. F. Fogarty
President, The North American Company

Mr. May's Rebuttal

To the Editors of The Nation:

Two principal themes seem to run through Mr. Fogarty's detailed communication; first, that Mr. Corcoran has misquoted me in various respects, and, second, that my own statements bearing on the North American system are to some extent fallacious. I believe it will clarify the rather confusing argument, including Mr. Fogarty's detailed citations of Mr. Corcoran's alleged misquotations of me, if I restate the underlying point of my article, with which I know Mr. Corcoran concurs. The principal inequity to public interest about which I complain is not the occurrence of specific instances of financial abuse or even of personal malfeasance. The purpose of my article was to show the ever-present continuing source of inherent and potential damage to the legitimate rights of senior-security-holding investors which *necessarily* arises from the directly conflicting interests of the holding companies, which of course dictate financial management. The holding companies are of necessity influenced by their own interests, which lie along the lines of aiding, abetting, and keeping afloat their own superimposed capital structures. In this situation the underlying bondholders and preferred stockholders have no legal or other defense against such financial squeezing and other asset spoliation as may be committed against them. This has nothing to do with any sensational individual charges, but, I believe, is fairly set forth by the instances cited in my article.

There is one serious misconception recurrent through Mr. Fogarty's communication, which should be mentioned because it exemplifies a very vital and dangerous fiction long common in American corporate management. I refer to his emphasis upon corporate surplus and undivided profits, irrespective of their form, and to his reliance upon their existence as justification for currently unearned dividend payments. It has been evidenced time and again in actual practice that surplus consisting of plant or other fixed capital does not prevent even the extreme event of corporate bankruptcy. Even on entrance into bankruptcy "book" assets invariably exceed liabilities. The St. Louis-San Francisco Railway, a company also operating on "a monthly cash basis," which entered bankruptcy immediately

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after making dividend payments of $3,000,000 in the single year 1931, exemplifies the irrelevance and evanescence of fixed "surplus." An example of how even federal regulatory bodies have had misplaced confidence in this factor is found in the following correspondence from the Interstate Commerce Commission, in which it then replied to me as a contemporary objector to the excessive Frisco dividends:

> The matter of declaration of dividends is a discretionary power usually vested in the board of directors of a carrier and does not come within the jurisdiction of this commission except that . . . it is unlawful for any officer or director to participate in the making or paying of any dividends from any funds properly included in capital account . . . [and further] the facts set forth in your letter . . . do not warrant an investigation by the commission; the annual report showing that the carrier at that time had a *surplus of $23,917,778.46*, which was far more than necessary to cover dividends on its preferred stock for the year 1931.

Mr. Fogarty characterizes the overdraft of North American Edison unearned-dividend payments of $1,807,000 as insignificant; I maintain that they constituted an unwarranted abuse against the creditors and preferred stockholders. My indictment seems to be supported by the appraisal of the investment market, for during each of the three years in which a total of $15,493,500 was paid out in common dividends, the preferred shares sold at lows of 49, 39, and 47½. The point is not whether the excess dividend payments were large or small but whether there would have been an overdraft at all but for the controlling holding company. The North American Edison-North American situation cited, especially as it apparently constitutes ordinary practice, is a valid answer to the holding companies' self-defending plea of investor "protection."

New York, May 15 A. WILFRED MAY

Patent Injustice

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

On April 29 the employees of the *American Mercury* magazine made upon their employers, Mr. Spivak and Mr. Palmer, certain elementary economic demands. These demands were for a minimum wage of $21, the rescinding of a recent pay cut, vacations with pay, and the recognition of their shop committee. The answer of the employers was a refusal to discuss demands except individually and the firing of two of the employees, one of whom had been employed by the magazine for more than eleven years. In answer to this violation of Section 7-a of the NRA, the office force went out in a solid strike.

On May 3 we, the undersigned writers, attending the American Writers' Congress, took the opportunity of joining in a peaceful mass picket line in front of the *American Mercury* office at 730 Fifth Avenue, thus expressing our sympathy and solidarity with the strikers. Several of us are former contributors to the *Mercury*. For this exercise of our rights of free speech and free assembly we were arrested in a group which included twenty-one writers and intellectuals, three of whom had been mere onlookers. We were charged with shouting, marching up and down, carrying placards, interfering with traffic. (We had walked single file along a sidewalk on which fifteen people could walk abreast.)

Our case was dragged out through three long court sittings until May 15. We were treated to an extended exhibit of conflicting testimony by Officer Paladino and Sergeant Scala, witnesses for the "people" against us. These officers were unable to agree on their testimony. Judge Smith of the Magistrate's Court, supposed to be an impartial representative of

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— and —

CHARTS OF SEX ORGANS WITH DETAILED EXPLANATIONS

By ROBERT L. DICKINSON, M.D., F.A.C.S., Senior Gynecologist and Obstetrician, Brooklyn Hospital

CONTENTS

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justice, instructed these policemen in their testimony by suggestion. He denied all possible objections of our attorneys and sustained all objections of the state's attorney. Furthermore, the Judge struck out all testimony which was social in its nature or might be interpreted as prejudicial to the employers, even shouting imprecations at us and our attorneys in a wholly undignified fashion. When one of our attorneys tried to tell the Judge that the Regional Labor Board had ruled that Mr. Spivak and Mr. Palmer had violated Section 7-a of the NRA and must reinstate the workers, the Judge shouted, "I don't care anything about this Regional Labor Association or whatever it has decided." And in spite of the fact that the Regional Labor Board had decided in favor of the strikers, we were all of us found guilty and given suspended sentences.

We should like to express in your columns our emphatic protest against the patent injustice of such a decision, which we see as an attack on the rights of citizens in general and of labor in particular, as an attempt to illegalize labor's weapon of mass picketing, which is and must remain a right under any but a fascist government. We wish, further, to point out that while this "justice" is being delivered still-born in the Magistrate's Court, while the Judge shouts out his decisions in favor of all employers and against workers, while the *American Mercury* workers are left to go on relief or on bread lines because they asserted their right to a decent living, the *American Mercury* employers, Mr. Spivak and Mr. Palmer, who have, according to the Regional Labor Board findings, violated Section 7-a of the NRA, remain in the sanctity of their offices, undisturbed by the processes of "justice" and the law.

New York, May 20 ANN RIVINGTON, GRACE LUMPKIN, EUGENE GORDON, JACK BALCH, MERIDEL LE SUEUR, EMMET GOWAN, IVAN BLACK, EUGENE JOFFE

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The Case for Equity

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

May I, as an individual actress, with considerable experience in the theater, say a word with regard to the article by Heywood Broun in *The Nation* of May 15 entitled Insurgency in Equity? No one in the Theater is unaware of Mr. Broun's interest in the actor, or of his friendship for the theater. I do not believe that he would intentionally say or do anything calculated to hurt the theater or its people. Yet there were implications in that article calculated to do real damage to Equity and to its membership.

What Mr. Broun said may fairly be divided into two parts: what Equity has done, or is doing; and what it has failed to do. Let us consider in the latter case the matter of salaries for rehearsals. There is very real disagreement among informed actors about whether rehearsal pay would or would not mean more money in the actor's pocket at the end of the season. Mr. Broun may not know it, but Equity is making a study of just what that would have meant in this past season, and the figures will be presented to the annual meeting. Prior to the completion of that study Equity does not feel justified in making any demands, although it has tried to sound out the attitude of the managers with regard to such a request. The theater is, as Mr. Broun knows, an expensive place for producers. Before presenting any demand which would make it more so, Equity wants to be sure that it is justified and, even more than that, whether it would discourage many productions from being made.

Relative to what Equity has done or is doing, I do not think that Mr. Broun is justified in saying that Equity's officers and council regard the theater as a dead horse, or behave as though they did. As a matter of fact almost every effort to revive the road or to remove barriers from theater-going has been at Equity's instance or with Equity's help. The League of New York Theaters was formed to combat ticket speculation at Equity's insistence. It was Equity that took the lead in attempts to get managers, stage hands and musicians, and other theater workers together around a common table in the Theater Board which preceded the league. It is Equity which has campaigned for a subsidy for playwrights, for rotary stock, for early curtains for suburban playgoers on certain nights, and for a long list of proposals which might have helped the theater if they had been conscientiously tried.

Now as to the administration's treatment of the opposition element in Equity. There is an opposition element, and they are making every effort to wrest the control of the association from the hands of the present administration. But that administration is being considerably more fair than it has to be, even to the extent of handicapping itself. I was at that meeting on March 1. No policeman was summoned, the member was not ejected; he left at the suggestion of his own friends and was later, by a vote of the meeting, readmitted. Whether or not there is feeling against the administration, I think I may say that there is no considerable desire to replace Frank Gillmore as Equity's head.

Equity may be susceptible of improvement. And Mr. Broun and others may have ideas as to where such improvements may be effected. But they would be worth more to Mr. Broun, to *The Nation,* and its readers if, before making such suggestions as these, he would confer with Equity's officers and representatives. I am sure that he would find them willing to tell him their reasons for their present policies and how they reached them. Then any disagreement with them would rest on some official basis.

New York, May 15 SELENA ROYLE

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Labor and Industry

Betrayal in a Garden

By HEYWOOD BROUN

THE papers say that Father Coughlin made a fighting speech before a packed house in New York. Everybody agrees that he aroused his listeners to a fever of enthusiasm. And yet as one who read the address carefully I must confess that I'm in doubt as to just whom the priest was fighting. Apparently it was Father Coughlin's intention to amplify and liberalize his attitude toward union labor. His Detroit meeting may have convinced him that the trade unionists still regard him and his program with suspicion. He was, I believe, more specific than usual in seeming support of unionism. Early in his address the leader of the National Union said:

> While we advocate the solidification of the broken segments of American life; while we advocate a philosophy of get-togetherness on the part of the laborer, the farmer, the soldier, the merchant, let it be clear that the National Union in no wise desires to disrupt the unity of the laborer in his organization or of the farmer in his unique organization. On the contrary, the National Union advocates that every man who earns bread by the sweat of his brow—every laborer, if he is true to the principles of Americanism—will join some labor union which is free, on the one hand, from the dictatorial powers of the capitalist and, on the other, from the subversive elements of the Communists. "Unionize yourselves" is our slogan to the laborer and to the farmer.

It seems to me that Father Coughlin was doing a singularly ill service to trade unionism at this precise point in his speech. Indeed, it is hard to believe that he did not do so intentionally. The good father professes to follow American affairs with an all-seeing eye. He has no right to ignore the fact that in every single strike of any consequence within the last two years the cry of "red" has been the first refuge of the employer. It was heard in San Francisco, in Toledo, and along the textile front. As a matter of fact, it is a device not limited to the larger labor controversies. Paul Palmer has played with it in the *Mercury* lockout. Russell took full-page advertisements during the Newark *Ledger* strike to announce that the Newspaper Guild was led by a Communist named Heywood Broun. An effort on the part of some members of Actors' Equity to get more vigorous leadership has of course been traced to Moscow. The movement of the Amalgamation group within the Big Six has been similarly stigmatized.

Now I happen to know that I am not a Communist, and indeed I think that the former tactics of that party in building up dual unionism were ill advised. Moreover, I believe that some A. F. of L. leaders have been unfairly criticized by Communists at times. And even so I say that nothing is more destructive to the labor movement in America than the attempt to divide workers by asking them to watch their neighbors and embark on heresy hunts.

For instance, I am under the impression that the Office Workers' Union has a number of Communist members. I know that the Newspaper Guild has a vigorous Communist minority and that this minority at times has given advice and counsel which have been accepted by the majority. Father Coughlin's accolade of approval is given only to those unions which are "free" from "the subversive elements of the Communists." I doubt whether there is a single labor group in the country which does not contain one or more Communists. Indeed, if there is a labor union which contains not one Communist, I would strongly advise it to go out into the highways and the byways and find at least a lone recruit. Communist advice may not always be sound, but it furnishes the sort of sharp and searching criticism which keeps leadership active. It is a potion against dry rot and reaction.

Certainly the "plutocrats" whom Father Coughlin professes to attack would like nothing better than a wholesale purging process along the labor front. Unions which decide to divert their energy into purging their ranks of Communists will assuredly find that employers will seize upon that period of internal strife as an opportunity to purge themselves of unions.

I assume that Father Coughlin's declaration for unions "free from the dictatorial powers of the capitalist" is intended to be a rebuke to company unionism. But I believe that the good father is extremely ignorant of labor necessities if he does not realize that company unionism can be killed only by a broad united front on the part of all the workers.

According to Father Coughlin's announcement, the American Federation of Labor is to be one of the spokes of the National Union. And what is the new gospel of political action which he offers to the labor movement? It is simply that time-tested and fallacious policy of bipartisan activity. The clergyman announced very definitely in his Madison Square Garden address that the National Union did not contemplate starting either a third or a fourth party. He seems to be not only willing but eager to function under the old two-party system. Members of the National Union are to go into the primaries of the political party to which they belong and attempt to bring about the nomination of the "right candidate." After these "right candidates" have duly captured a place on the ballots, members of the National Union are suddenly to forgo partisanship and vote not as Republicans or Democrats but as "Americans."

The priest is hardly bringing anything new to the A. F. of L. in this suggestion. It is a policy which the Federation has followed for years, and the returns in favorable legislation could certainly be stuck in Matthew Woll's right eye. Perhaps a Coughlin partisan may argue that through the National Union the machinery of one of the existing major parties may be captured either locally or nationally. The experience of Upton Sinclair should be a useful citation in proof of the inutility of such a procedure. Mr. Sinclair captured the Democratic nomination in Cali-

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fornia, but when he woke up the next morning he found that overnight the Democratic machine had changed its spots and become the Republican machine.

I suppose that few will quarrel with the assertion that William Randolph Hearst is the most powerful and articulate defender of big business and its interests in America today. Mr. Hearst seems to like Father Coughlin. Why wouldn't he? After all, what Father Coughlin said at the Madison Square meeting was that he favored trade unionism just as long as it continued to perpetuate its most obvious mistakes. Historically speaking, it seems to me that Father Coughlin's Madison Square speech should be recorded as the second greatest betrayal which has ever occurred in a garden.

The Mother Lode Mines Strike

By MILLA ZENOVICH

San Francisco, May 15

LIKE the ghost towns which haunt the picturesque Mother Lode country of California, the mine strike at Jackson, now in its eighth month, seems destined to become a "ghost" struggle, the traces of which will be pointed out as a warning to those who think they can shake one of the strongest industrial and social structures in the United States. Since the early days of California history, the tall gray mills of the gold mines have towered above the one-industry town of Jackson like the castles of feudal lords. All these years, even through the depression, the economic and social life of the community has been almost unicellular in its simplicity. There have always been the mines to furnish pay checks, which on every pay day went to a handful of merchants, who in this direct way built up small fortunes and acquired the power to keep the control of the community and the county within their grasp.

In May of last year six hundred workers of the four large mines surrounding Jackson were encouraged by the guaranty in Section 7-a to organize the Mother Lode Miners' Union as a defense against conditions which had long been intolerable. Notice was served on the four companies that unless the demands for decent working conditions and increased wages based on the almost doubled price of gold were received in a cooperative spirit by October 4, a strike would be called. On October 1, as the men on the day shift of the Argonaut mine were leaving work, they were summarily dismissed. To forestall a lockout union leaders promptly called the men out of the other mines, and the strike was on.

At first the merchants of the community with their eyes on increased pay checks were solidly behind the strikers. An element of sympathy may have mingled with this support, for conditions in the mines were vile enough to depress even the money lenders in their grocery stores above. Men who have worked in mines throughout the United States declare that there is no mine in the country to equal the disease-breeding Argonaut. This mine, whose ownership through subsidiary companies and interlocking executives can be traced back to the General Motors Corporation, is the largest and most powerful of the four mines involved in the strike. It is 6,050 feet deep, with an intricate network of tunnels, raises, and drifts spreading for three miles underground. Advice is handed down from father to son to stay out of this death trap, and women fear it as a chained dragon which may at any moment vent its fury as it did in 1922, when it took the lives of forty-nine men. Each shift in the Argonaut mine is nine hours long; every minute of the shift is spent in the mines, seven days a week. While working in these dark passages a mile underground the men have no fresh air except that supplied by the current which enters the eighteen-foot opening of the main shaft. Theoretically, this air circulates through the narrow winding tunnels and raises, many of which are too small for an average-sized man to crawl through, and then is drawn out through a crooked shaft by an electric fan small enough for a man to carry.

After working for fifteen minutes a miner is ready to faint with suffocation and nausea. The Argonaut is known as a cold mine; that is, the earth and temperature are naturally cool. But lack of ventilation creates a furnace where men work night or day dripping in perspiration. If a compressed-air hose is handy, a man can refresh himself to some extent by breathing in synthetic air filled with oil and other impurities. During the lunch hour, while the men crawl off to other holes in the mine, blasting is done, and as a result the air is so heavy with silica dust when the miners return to work that they must use the light on their caps to find their tools.

Workers in this mine have either silicosis (miners' consumption) or deafness, or both, to look forward to. Last year in Jackson twenty-six silicosis victims were buried. Records are available of the men now dying of the disease in Weimar Sanitarium, which serves this region, but there are no statistics to show how many of the sunken-cheeked men still on their feet are suffering from it. No compensation is paid for silicosis; the mine owners have so far found refuge in a comforting legal technicality according to which workers, in order to receive compensation, must prove in which mine the disease was contracted.

The smallest of the four mines, the Central Eureka, agreed to arbitrate the demands of the men, but during the sixty days allotted for the arbitration the owners of the mine would not approve any choice for the seventh, or impartial, member of the board. In the proposals submitted to the owners of the Central Eureka mine the strikers included certain demands which throw a light on the criminally careless way in which the mine operators neglect the health and safety of the men. The miners asked that first-aid stations or some sort of first-aid equipment be provided, that fresh, cold drinking water be supplied at all working places instead of on levels several hundred feet away, that their descent into the mine be made less dangerous by the simple expedient of having their tools hauled separately or stored in a room below, and that staggered ladders be installed in the manways to eliminate the many accidents

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incurred by falling. The strikers are holding out desperately because they feel that any alternative is preferable to going back into the mines unless conditions are made reasonably safe. It has been estimated that through the widening of tunnels, the installation of adequate fans, the postponement of blasting until the men are out of the mines, and the correction of certain other careless practices the mine would enjoy increased productivity at very small cost.

With the backing of the merchants it seemed at first as if the strike would be successful, though the mine owners had stated that they would abandon the mines, which were all flooded, rather than parley with the unions. Miners and merchants were a solid body, the merchants extending credit and performing many helpful services to the picketers. But a few months ago, as the merchants were beginning to despair of ever seeing that extra 50 cents a day in their cash tills, the owners of the Argonaut announced that they would reopen the mine and appealed to the good burghers to cooperate. Suddenly the temper of the town changed. The American Protective League of Amador County, whose directors are the leading merchants of Jackson, was organized; at the same time the Mother Lode Vigilante Committee was set up, and in its first bulletin threw down the gauntlet to the strikers. "Gold mining, our principal business and the source of our payrolls, has stopped, and we citizens daily find our business and personal affairs getting worse and worse," the bulletin announced. "This town of Jackson has had the reputation of being a town that was never affected by the depression and now we have nothing but depression. Are we going to stand for this?" In the following bulletins the blame for "this insane wrecking of our lives" was divided between labor agitators and Communists. On January 19 the vigilantes reached a high pitch of indignation and sent out a warning that "automobile rides these cold nights are liable to give one pneumonia —if nothing worse. From now on the Vigilante Committee will be known by its deeds and not by its words."

And by its deeds it became infamous. When the Argonaut mine was reopened with a handful of "scalleys," two hundred leading citizens were on guard with guns, bayonets, and fierce looks. Only a small demonstration attended the opening, but numerous arrests were made. Sheriff's posses and vigilante groups entered homes after midnight without search warrants and dragged frightened householders to jail. Trumped-up charges were made against the more aggressive strikers. Aliens in fear of deportation were intimidated into bringing charges against their friends. There were the usual high-handed ordinances against picketing. There is no telling to what lengths the terrorism would have gone had not the California State Federation of Labor sent attorneys into the county. The knowledge that the workers have powerful supporters has had a sobering effect on the local bullies.

For two months after the arrival of attorneys and leaders no disturbances occurred on either side. But on May 12 carloads of longshoremen and others, described by the newspapers as Communist agitators, joined the picket line. A battle with two hundred vigilantes followed. The strikers, obeying instructions, would not be drawn into the combat. The next day twenty vigilantes with ominous threats escorted the representative of the state federation to the county line and ordered him to keep going. Labor throughout California was outraged by this act and Edward D. Vandeleur, president of the state federation, appealed to the Governor for protection against lawlessness. The Governor was also asked to appoint an arbitration board for the settlement of the strike. The Governor has replied that he will give the matter his attention after the adjournment of the legislature.

In the eighth month of their strike the miners, while not very hopeful of winning, are at least determined to hold out if only to justify the support given them by labor unions throughout the country. Donations from other unions in the state and the State Federation of Labor and from miners' unions in the East have supplied them with bread and other necessities. A few days' work a month furnished by the SERA keeps them from destitution.

At the beginning of the strike government intervention was sought, and a conciliator was sent to Jackson. At the end of his one day's investigation—he is not known to have gone into the mines—he advised the men to return to work and to negotiate with the companies without the protection of their union standing. Despite this disappointment the miners, up to a few weeks ago, looked to the federal government for help. When they learned that Miss Perkins would be in San Francisco in March for the five-state labor conference, the strikers with simple faith asked their leaders to put the matter before her. The president of the State Federation of Labor and other officials made strong appeals in behalf of the strikers, and the Secretary of Labor appeared to be deeply stirred by the silicosis situation. She instructed the miners' spokesmen to give her secretary the full data and promised that "the matter would be investigated." So far nothing more has been heard from Washington.

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A Friend of Letters

Chronicles of Barabbas, 1884-1934. By George H. Doran. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

ON an April day in 1884 a handsome, wide-eyed, Presbyterian lad of fourteen was walking down Yonge Street in Toronto, looking for a job. In the window of "an imposing-looking publishing house and bookstore" he saw a sign, "Smart Boy Wanted," and above the window he saw another and larger sign, "The Toronto Willard Tract Depository, Ltd." He went in, tackled the proper authorities, passed a stiff examination in Christian evidences, and was employed at $2 a week. The place was a hive of enterprise, but it was also a temple of consecration. The head guy, a former lumber dealer, was "a religious zealot, almost a fanatic." Upstairs the Berean Circle met weekly to howl down sin, and outside, on the street-corner, there was a constant procession of evangelists operating cornets, portable organs, cymbals, slip-horns, and other such bull-roarers. Day by day, week in and week out, the evangelical pastors of Ontario filed through the premises, thumbing the books on display and letting fall sepulchral admonitions. The prevailing view among them was that the wickedness of the world had got beyond the endurance of the Holy Ghost, and that the Second Coming was at hand.

Young George Doran waited for it for eight long years, but nothing happened—nothing, that is, save that the business gradually went down hill. In 1892, despairing of either growing rich in Canada or being translated to the New Jerusalem on the hoof, he moved to Chicago, and there got a job at $1,000 a year. It was again with a religious publisher, but this time the office was less clammily sacerdotal. In its freer, headier air the young man made quick progress, and in a little while he was well on the way to opulence and eminence. By 1908 he was immersed in the unblushing Gomorrah of New York, and at the head of his own business, and by the end of the war he was turning out a thousand long tons of books a year, and never a ship docked at New York but brought him another English author, panting for Yankee gold. Now, at sixty-five, he sits down comfortably to tell his story.

It makes, like any other autobiography, very good reading, for no man, writing about himself, can be really dull. If he lets fall the truth he admits us once more to the ever amusing imbecility of humankind, and if he tries to lie we catch him easily, and are amused the more. Mr. Doran's entertainment belongs predominantly to the former category. It may be that, in dealing with his own professional prodigies, he sometimes teases the facts a bit, and it may be that, in paying off people he dislikes, he sometimes enhooches justice with a dash of his native Calvinism, but on the whole he seems to stick pretty close to the record. It is the record, not only of one man's life, but also of a long, brilliant, and extremely melancholy chapter in the history of American publishing, beginning with a dizzy jaunt to the stratosphere and ending with a colossal kerthump.

But Mr. Doran was never a mere publisher; he was also a patriot, a statesman, a frequenter of chancelleries and salons. It was his happy fate to play an important part in that rapprochement between the American colonies and the Motherland which was one of the great spiritual usufructs of the World War. Though he had been naturalized in 1896, he remained a true son of the British Kultur, and when the Hun assaulted it so foully in 1914 his blood boiled. Soon he was in contact with the proper persons at home, and thereafter, until the backward Yankee at last waded in, his publishing house was a fountain of sound information upon the matters at issue. It printed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets describing the hair-raising atrocities in Belgium, and more hundreds of thousands setting forth the altruistic determination of British statesmanship to free the oppressed peoples of all lands, and establish democracy everywhere. This work brought him into contact with the foremost thinkers of England, and if it had not been for his formal renunciation of Queen Victoria in 1896, there is no telling what honors might not have come to him.

Like any other publisher who is literate at all, he writes rather better than most of his authors. His characterization of Arnold Bennett, for example, is full of adroit turns of phrase and pawky humors. He greatly admired Bennett the novelist, and still venerates his memory, but the fact does not escape him that the private man was mainly a comic character. He writes shrewdly and effectively, too, about D. H. Lawrence and other literary bigwigs, and some of his pen-portraits of his fellow-publishers are enriched with a poisonous malice. Roughly speaking, the authors he has had contact with, whether as publisher or as gadabout, are given space in his book in proportion to their earning capacity in the free markets of the world. Thus Bennett gets twenty-three pages, Edgar Wallace nine, and Michael Arlen six, but Joseph Conrad rates less than a page, and Dreiser is recalled only as "a distinguished American contemporary" of W. Somerset Maugham. So with the ladies. Mary Roberts Rinehart has a chapter all to herself, and is mentioned also in divers other places, but I search the index from end to end without finding any mention whatever of Willa Cather.

Mr. Doran, in the midst of his triumphant services to God, king, and swell letters, pulled two dreadful boners, and here sets them down in laudable candor. When he was a publishing midshipman in Chicago he let slip Charles Sheldon's "In His Steps," the greatest best-seller of them all. And a bit later on, having been promoted leftenant, he muffed the whole works of Harold Bell Wright. It takes a brave man to admit such appalling indiscretions. Many another American publisher made them too, but Mr. Doran is the only one, so far, to acknowledge the embarrassing corn.

H. L. MENCKEN

Not Easily Labeled

Dance of Fire. By Lola Ridge. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $2.

THE lyrics in this volume are so distinctive as to elude ready-made labels. One of the labels which spring quickly to mind and yet do not quite suit is the adjective "proletarian." In "Dance of Fire" Miss Ridge has written more mature poetry than any other American who is motivated by sympathy with the workers' cause. But it is not at all the sort of thing that critics have been praying for in this genre, and technically it bears little resemblance to the bulk of the "proletarian" verse that is being produced currently in large quantities. The contemporary poet with whom Miss Ridge here displays the most in common is, perhaps, the German symbolist Stefan George; and the imagery and the manner suggest that the "Vita Nuova" and even Rossetti in his better moments may have influenced her.

With its quiet and meditative music, the sonnet sequence Via Ignis sounds now like devotional verse and now like "pure" poetry. Yet it springs from a complicated matrix of thought

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and feeling in which the most diverse elements have been brought into a synthesis. The poet's ardor for a political faith has not caused her to lose sight of personal values. The Heracleitean flux, the present "dynasty of fire" which she chronicles, contains intimations of a *logos,* or ordering principle, which works not only toward social justice but also toward regeneration of body and spirit. There are glimpses of the beatific vision, a vision that is, however, free from apocalyptic melodrama. "Man is no mere puppet of destiny," Miss Ridge writes in the brief foreword, "and he alone can extricate himself from chaos. We may come forth, for a period, into the time of light."

The language of the sonnets is in the tradition, and occasionally even archaic, but it is not hackneyed. From familiar material she has wrought lines like "over the lilies and the working grain," and "the blood singing to the ancient horn." An accomplished rhetorician in the best sense of the word, Miss Ridge is able to bring out the poetry latent in abstractions. When she errs, it is often because of inability to evoke a sense of immediacy. The diffuseness observable here and there she has perhaps caught from Robinson Jeffers and E. A. Robinson, to both of whom she dedicates admiring poems. Her verse would be a more powerful instrument if its complexity were more often relieved by passages of limpid simplicity such as this:

> Who loves must bind and be, with the one chain,
> Linked to the dear possession: Jesus knew
> This . . . and Siddartha who went forth alone,
> From the sweet-smelling bed where he had lain,
> Bare-footed into the bare dawn, and grew
> Toward larger ends of love in loving none.

Few poets, however, write many lines like these in a lifetime.

The topical poems on Sacco and Vanzetti, Tom Mooney, and Van Der Lubbe are remarkable for their restraint and lack of special pleading: she presents even the former Governor of Massachusetts as a human being, and she dismisses Rolph without rancor as "a fleck of dust among the archives." The poet does not argue, but lets events and characters speak for themselves. In these poems Miss Ridge reverts to the more modern idiom of her earlier work. If they are not as effective as the sonnets and her preceding volume, "Firehead," which dealt with the Christ legend, this may be either because the revolutionary movement has not yet developed an adequate mythology or because social morality is less easily adaptable than personal morality to mythopoësis.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE

Pure Delight

National Velvet. By Enid Bagnold. William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

ENID BAGNOLD, the anonymous author of "Serena Blandish," has written in "National Velvet" one of the few great fictional studies in child psychology of recent years. In the acuteness of its truth the book is reminiscent of Richard Hughes's "Innocent Voyage," although Mrs. Bagnold's children are not the curiously warped yet natural children of that exceedingly Welsh book but perfectly average young girls to whom completely unreal things happen.

The book is the story of how Velvet Brown, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a South of England butcher, wins the Grand National with a horse she won in a shilling lottery and trained and rode herself. The tale is completely unreal, but is told so realistically that we are reduced to a willing suspension of disbelief. What happens to Velvet Brown is so completely in accord with what we ourselves would have wished for ourselves as fourteen-year-olds that we do not give a thought to its plausibility. Mrs. Bagnold knows horses, as does her thirteen-year-old daughter who did the drawings for the book, and the description of the race and the resultant effects on the winner who hoaxed the National Hunt Committee and the vast public is one of the most vivid and totally effective bits of writing that the reader is ever apt to come across.

"National Velvet" is the May choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and it is not hard to see why it was chosen. It is pure fiction without the least concern with anything except the exceedingly good story it has to tell. It is to be highly recommended to all those who like good writing, are for the moment tired of national epics, picaresque novels, and proletarian fiction, and are willing to forget society and its troubles for a few hours of simple delight.

MASON WADE

Economics Made Simple

Rich Man, Poor Man. By Ryllis Alexander Goslin and Omar Pancoast Goslin. A Publication of the People's League for Economic Security. Harper and Brothers. $1.

THE authors of this book have opened a new vista in the field of popular education. Throughout the depression publicists have groped for a medium for presenting abstract, technical information in terms that would be readily intelligible to men and women possessing only a moderate amount of formal education. Apart from "The New Russian Primer," which was written specifically for children, the results have been disappointing. With few exceptions, the more popularly written books have been so superficial as to be definitely pernicious, while the attempts at popularization on the part of recognized authorities have failed in their fundamental purpose.

Much of the appeal of "Rich Man, Poor Man" lies in the generous and intelligent use of charts of the type recently introduced in this country by Dr. Otto Neurath of Vienna. Even without the text the charts tell the story of the present-day economic paradox: the abundant resources possessed by the United States, the relative poverty of its population, the catastrophic effects of the depression, the efficiency of public as contrasted with private enterprise, and the increase in goods and services that would be achieved in a well-ordered national economy. In its way the text is as simple and vivid as the charts. The authors have climbed unscaled heights in their ability to portray complex economic phenomena with charm and clarity, yet without gross oversimplification. The result is a book which should equally captivate the interest of a ten-year-old child, a busy housewife, a class-conscious radical of European origin, or a conservative professor of economics at one of our universities. If sufficiently pushed by its publishers, it should enjoy a sale of tens or even hundreds of thousands of copies in a country that is hungry for just such information.

Having been thus lavish with praise for the technical merits of the book, one naturally wishes that its contents were equally satisfactory. The analysis of the cause of our economic distress is, indeed, brilliant, and is identical with the dominant trend in present-day economic thought. Nor can one take exception to the rather long section showing that government enterprise is, in the main, more efficient than private business, although one has a feeling that the point has been somewhat overstressed. The chief defect in the book is a neo-technocratic ailment which might be described as the "Age of Plenty" complex. Although it points out that 75 per cent of the American people did not have an adequate diet even in 1929,

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that two-thirds of our families did not have decent homes, and that relatively few had sufficient medical and dental care, it nevertheless maintains that there would be an abundance for all if we would reorganize our economic system on the principle of service instead of profit. Just how this reorganization is to take place is, unfortunately, left extremely vague. We are to "socialize" credit, the railways, natural resources, and the basic industries, but details of the manner in which power is to be transferred and the new society organized against reactionary opposition are left entirely to the imagination. This is not to suggest that the book should be made into a treatise on politics, but merely that a bit of realism would greatly enhance the value of an otherwise admirable job.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

A Gesture Toward Peace

Why Wars Must Cease. By Carrie Chapman Catt and Others. The Macmillan Company. $1.

IT took the Interparliamentary Union forty years to see the futility of its efforts to humanize war by formulating its etiquette and to tell the world in a scientific symposium that war has to be abolished root and branch if it is not to abolish civilization. It took the Committee on the Cause and Cure of War ten years to see the necessity of abandoning pacifist kindergarten games and to make the serious gesture of this volume. And it is, alas, only a gesture. It presents in several of its ten chapters the best-known facts and arguments for the abolition of war, but not the slightest hint of how to go about it.

For those who need to be convinced that wars must cease, there is solid food in the chapters by Mrs. Roosevelt, Judge Florence Allen, and Mary E. Woolley. Mrs. Emily Newell Blair's chapter constitutes the most important part of the volume. Debunking the fallacy of defensive war, she courageously opposes the dangerous, pseudo-patriotic argument of defense to which too many pacifists meekly yield. Mrs. William Brown Meloney's chapter vividly presents the astronomical figures of the costs of war. Florence Brewer Boeckel, however, shortsightedly states: "In the world we are living in today *the one certain result of war* [italics mine] is economic depression." Are loss of millions of lives, war diseases, mutilations, race deterioration, and a few similar results not certain?

The old desire to avoid the appearance of "womanly emotionalism"—so well used for their purposes by the militarists—has obviously prevented the inclusion of a chapter on the sex side of war. The field brothels, with their commandeered females and rules about the different hours, fees, and duration of the visits allotted to officers and non-commissioned soldier sons and husbands, are delicately omitted. Venereal diseases acquired during war service and the perverted sex practices forced on soldiers and sailors are also too ungenteel to be mentioned. Dr. Woolley remembers fatherless half-orphaned children, but obviously only those robbed of legitimate fathers. None of the authors mentions the tens of thousands of illegitimate war children, all over the globe, as an argument that wars must cease. There is no chapter dealing with the demoralization and ruin of women left for years in a manless world or patriotically urged to serve the men who are admonished to breed before they die.

A very short chapter could have supplied the bold outline for the bold action needed to bring about a warless world in our lifetime. With one-fifth of America's adult women ready to act if told what to do, Mrs. Chapman Catt and her co-leaders carry an awful responsibility if they fail to issue the call.

ROSIKA SCHWIMMER

Shorter Notices

Strange Holiness. By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. The Macmillan Company. $1.75.

The dominant note in these conventional but pleasant poems of rustic life is romantic wonder. Each of them presents a scene or an incident which, as the author usually tells us in the poem, transfixes him with a sense of a sacrament partaken. More resourceful craftsmen could have made the reader feel the strange holiness without finding it necessary to label it for him. If the reader is not able to reproduce the emotion in all its intensity, he is, however, made to feel that the poet was genuinely moved. Mr. Coffin has the gift of observation, and conveys something of his own gusto for orchards, barns, and pastures. He appears to have a model farm, whose treasures blight and drought do not consume, nor mortgagees break through and steal.

A Few Foolish Ones. By Gladys Hasty Carroll. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

Mrs. Carroll shows considerable skill in reproducing country dialect, and she writes in an unpretentious, quietly self-assured style that is not without its moments of charm. Unfortunately, this is about all that can be said for her second novel. It is impossible to discover just what Mrs. Carroll intended it to be. It cannot be called a novel of character because the characters are types—when they are anything at all—and even as types they do not emerge. Nor can it be described as a plot novel, for the plot—that of the call of home proving stronger, for "a few foolish ones," than the lure of strange places—is far too frail to support the burden of some 380 pages and far too mechanical to embrace the varied impulses and ambitions, joys and sorrows of a growing community or the violent social changes of the period (1870-1920). Most of the time the characters appear to exist apart from the plot, without enough substance of their own, however, to justify such independence.

Vidocq: The Personal Memoirs of the First Great Detective. Edited and Translated by Edwin Gile Rich. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.

François-Eugène Vidocq was born in Arras in 1775. As a youth he became, if not a criminal himself, at least involved with criminals of the revolutionary period in such a way that he was condemned to the galleys. After a series of escapes, picaresque adventures, and recaptures he turned informer, and was so resourceful and helpful that he rose to be, first, secret agent, then prefect of the Parisian police. He retired in 1827 after eighteen years of service, during which he introduced many of the methods of criminal investigation that have since been extended and refined. Whether he wrote the memoirs which appeared the following year is disputed, like almost everything else about the man. He seems then to have founded a humanitarian factory in which convicts were employed. After it failed he apparently joined the political police, but was discharged in suspicious circumstances connected with a daring crime. He died about 1857; some say in poverty, but an equally credible and more memorable account is that ten attractive young ladies attended his funeral, each supplied with a will in which the octogenarian Lothario had left her all his property. Poe in this country, Conan Doyle in England, Gaboriau in France (his Lecocq is Vidocq), and a whole legion of their successors have profited either directly or indirectly by Vidocq's memoirs. But it is as a forerunner of the sociological novel that Vidocq's book is of greatest importance, for it is one of the first to deal with the lives of the underprivileged,

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and as such, the courier of a tremendously significant tradition. Many pages of "Les Misérables" proclaim immediate indebtedness to Vidocq; Balzac, whose Vautrin was also inspired by Vidocq, is equally under obligation. In England Dickens's "Great Expectations" probably stems from the same source. Even our proletarian writers of today, whether they know it or not, owe a debt by way of this great trio, and others, to old Vidocq. The translation, which is abridged one-half, is five-thumbed. However, it is useful to have even such a translation in print and available.

Golden Fleece. By William Rose Benét. Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.

This selection of shorter poems and ballads is drawn mainly from two previous books, "Man Possessed" and "Starry Harness"; it includes also fifteen pieces hitherto unassembled. Mr. Benét has his public, who will know what to expect. Nothing here is likely to attract those who have sampled him and remained indifferent. The best poems are the less pretentious lyrics and occasional verse written to and about people that he knows. The ballads lack salt; and the more ambitious efforts are inflated and turgid. After thirty prolific years this writer is still doing apprentice work, lacking focus, the direct vision, and organic unity of form and content.

Economic Handbook of the Pacific Area. Edited by Frederick V. Field. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $5.

The secretary of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations has assembled in this book an almost incredibly large amount of information about the people living around the Pacific basin, much of it hitherto unobtainable in any source. A unique feature of the volume, which is to some degree a handicap, is the classification of material by topics rather than by countries. In addition to covering the usual subjects of population, trade, and finance, the handbook contains especially valuable chapters on food production, international mineral products, and textiles. It is unqualifiedly recommended for reference purposes to all serious students of the Far East.

Agrarianism. By Troy J. Cauley. University of North Carolina Press. $1.50.

This book is of little interest so far as the author's performance is concerned. His positions are hastily taken and poorly defended. He frequently supplements his own naive arguments by the oracular and sometimes irrelevant utterances of others. It would not be hard to show that he is often badly informed. His book has significance because it represents a defeatist attitude toward the problems raised by the depression. Professor Cauley would escape from the vexations of capitalist collapse by a retreat into a primitive, self-sustaining agricultural system. He is ahead of Mrs. Roosevelt's homestead farm communities only in that he wants the plan extended to embrace the mass of the population. He thinks that man has out-smarted himself, and now cannot possibly manage the complicated economic machine which he has brought into being. He considers that collectivism is an ineligible expedient because it will destroy individual freedom. In his fear of regimentation he is on all fours with Mr. Hoover. He is unable to see that there is no incompatibility between security and liberty, but that, on the contrary, the first is necessary to the second. The right method is not to oppose mechanical progress, but to use it for our benefit instead of submitting to be destroyed by it. A peasantry is not the alternative to the proletariat. But it appears that the long struggle of the South to substitute the turbine and tractor for the mule has taught this professor of economics in the Georgia School of Technology exactly nothing.

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Drama

Red Parade

WITH considerable curiosity I looked forward to "Parade," the pro-Soviet and anti-New Deal revue which the Theater Guild has just sponsored at its own theater. Various problems seemed to me to be involved in the plan to combine the spirit of Karl Marx with that of Earl Carroll, and though "Parade" undoubtedly has its moments I am bound to report that the problems are yet to be solved. It is hard to hoof out a dialectic demonstration of capitalism's doom, and though almost as many minds appear to have gone to the making of the present entertainment as go to the making of the average revue, it seems to me to consist of the following in about equal parts: (1) pointed, funny, and rather effective sketches; (2) conventional and inappropriate filling of the sort found in any musical spectacle; (3) unsuccessful attempts to adapt such jazz devices as the "torch song" to proletarian ends. To the assets must also be added Jimmy Savo, a mimic of genius who succeeds to a surprising degree in giving to his antics a propagandish tinge; among the liabilities are the introductory songs "in one," which ought to be burlesqued but aren't.

Among the conventional devices of the revue the blackout seems to be the one most easily adapted to the ends of propaganda, and at least two—"The Last Jackass," which devotes itself to events on Tobacco Road when the agents of the AAA pay it a visit, and "Home of the Brave," which shows a Nazified America in which everybody has to pretend to be a pure-blooded Indian—are first-rate. Several others in which Savo appears are, thanks to him, carried off very well indeed, and several of the dance pantomimes in an aggressively "modern" style are also effective. On the other hand, most of the attempts to use the idiom of jazz and tap dance are positively embarrassing because they emphasize only too strongly the fundamental incongruity in the effort to use solemnly a technique which is essentially an expression of the very mood and spirit which the authors of "Parade" are out to destroy. Dramatic lyrics like "Fear in My Heart" and "Life Could Be So Beautiful" use the irregular verse forms of the typical ballad of Broadway sentiment. Their musical idiom is that of the torch song, and they are delivered in the same moaning croon from the same half-darkened stage as that favored by Libby Holman and her kind. If you listen carefully to the words you may, it is true, discover that they are not concerned with the sorrows of a maiden lamenting her continued affection for a man who done her wrong. Instead they are complaining that it is difficult to give oneself up to moonlight and love with fear in one's heart, or affirming that "life could be so beautiful" if it were not for the inequitable distribution of wealth. But the mere change in words is not sufficient to effect any real change in the whole manner, mood, and effect of the song. It remains as completely Broadwayish in mood and sentiment as it could possibly be, and it tempts one to button-hole the authors for a yes or no answer to a simple question: Is sentimental bourgeois art a rancid fake or isn't it?

"The Tabloid Reds," a ballet in which Communists are represented as committing the various outrages attributed to them by the yellow press, is funny and well worked out. Like several of the other sketches it ridicules the red scare effectively enough, but it also raises again a question I have had on my mind for some time. Is the revolution really imminent or not? One moment I am told by my radical friends that it is, and the next I find them making fun of the *bon bourgeois*

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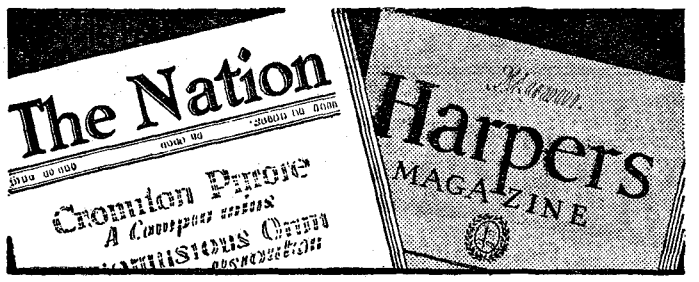

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who gets the jitters every time a red is mentioned. To me it seems that you cannot have it both ways. If the middle class is behaving like an elephant seeing a mouse, then the revolution is only a mouse. If it isn't, then there is nothing comic about the "red scare." Or at least those who are scared have good reason to be. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

P. S. *The Nation* is most disrespectfully referred to.

Films

Monologues by Bergner

WHAT the film version of "Escape Me Never" at the Radio City Music Hall principally illustrates is the not unfamiliar truth that acting alone, however interesting by and for itself, is never enough to make a satisfactory photoplay. Margaret Kennedy's touching little day dream of love and art among the more nomadic sections of British Bohemia proves to be even more insubstantial on the screen than on the stage. As in all her novels and plays Miss Kennedy is concerned with presenting not so much a story as the emanation of a story; and since the screen is itself something of an emanation, the result is an impression of reality at second or possibly even third remove—like those attempts at photographic recapturing of the ectoplasm. Add to this the objections that the Venetian and Alpine backgrounds are pasted on like penny postcards, that the cutting has been done with a sturdy pair of shears in the dark, and that the ratio of dialogue to movement is uniformly disproportionate, and it will be understood why even the brilliant talents of Elisabeth Bergner are an insufficient guaranty against tedium. In two or three scenes, it is true, Miss Bergner succeeds in making us forget the rest of the picture: one in which she scandalizes an upper-class English group with a frank recital of her life, another in which she conceals her unhappiness upon being abandoned by her composer friend, and the truly great scene during the rehearsal of his ballet when she tries to convey to him that her child is dead. But each of these feats is capable of being detached from the main flow and movement of the picture as a whole; they have the precise self-sufficiency of a monologue by Yvette Guilbert or Ruth Draper. Miss Bergner depends neither on the play nor on the other members of the cast to secure her effects. So independent is her appeal, as a matter of fact, that it raises the question whether her style of acting would ever be appropriate for the screen. Miss Bergner has been compared to Eleanora Duse; and in her perfect mastery of the inarticulate, as in the scene of the child's death, there is some support for the comparison. But in this identification of her with the essentially heroic tradition to which Duse belonged there is also a possible explanation for her being so little at home in a medium which requires above all else subordination of the personality on the part of the individual actor. It is not a paradox to say that it is because of her very great gifts as an actress that Miss Bergner is likely to disrupt whatever film she appears in. Her acting belongs to a tradition which is irreconcilably at odds with the tradition the screen is trying to build up. WILLIAM TROY

In *The Nation* for June 19

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by Joseph Wood Krutch, William Troy, Charles Angoff, Mark Van Doren, and Others.

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